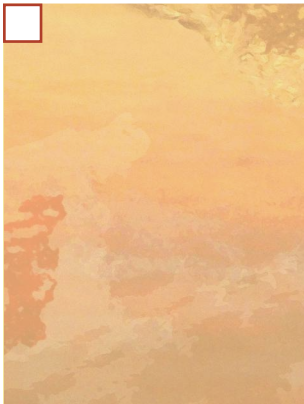




# GENDER AND POLITICAL PARTIES

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FAR FROM PARITY



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*Gender and Political parties: Far from parity*

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# Preface

More than 85 years have passed since Matilde Hidalgo cast her historic vote in Loja, Ecuador – the first vote ever cast by a woman in an election in Latin America. The right to vote has existed in the region for 50 years, but there is still a long road ahead to achieve true equality between men and women and the fulfillment of women’s political rights, particularly the right to be elected to public office.

Any effort to better understand the reasons for this gap in democracy must include a review of political parties, which are often called the “gatekeepers” of effective participation. These organizations are responsible for drawing up candidate lists, and also act as incubators for future political leaders. It will be difficult to achieve gender equality in politics while women cannot participate as equal partners in political parties.

Joined by a common interest in promoting research and action on equitable political participation, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) decided to collaborate on the creation of a database on Gender and Political Parties in Latin America (GEPPAL). The database was developed by a network of researchers from 18 countries in the region using a sample of 94 political parties, and it forms the basis for the analysis presented in this publication.

The IDB is fully committed to promoting gender equality through investments in women’s economic, social and political empowerment. Since 1998, when the Program for the Support of Women’s Leadership and Representation (PROLEAD) was launched, the IDB has sought to increase women’s civic and political participation and access to public decision-making positions in order to strengthen democratic processes and institutions. The IDB is also in the process of approving a new gender equality policy to reinforce its response to the goals and commitments of its Latin American and Caribbean member countries in promoting gender equality.

Since it was founded, in 1995, International IDEA has worked on gender and democracy issues to identify and eliminate obstacles to women’s full political participation. In order to promote gender equality in politics, International IDEA encourages debate and the exchange of experiences, suggesting technical solutions to the obstacles faced by women and providing tools to enhance their role as political leaders. International IDEA published *From Words to Action: Best Practices for Women’s Participation in Latin*



*American Political Parties* in 2008. Its focus on the qualitative aspects of women's participation in political parties complements this study.

Since information is power, the GEPPAL database and this publication provide comparative data for women and men in political parties, from grassroots members to party leaders, as well as the media and civil society about the status of and challenges for women's participation in political parties. This can be used to encourage gender equality in all spheres of political parties.

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The entire project was directed by Vivian Roza and Gisela Garzón de la Roza of the IDB's PROLEAD program, and Beatriz Llanos and Kristen Sample of International IDEA. We would like to highlight the important role played by Kristen Sample in all phases of the project, from the formulation of the surveys to sample selection, design of the GEPPAL database and preparation of this document, during which she made a significant contribution to the analysis, conclusions and recommendations.

## Executive summary

The election of four women presidents in Latin America in recent years has cast a spotlight on the issue of women's political participation and their access to public decision-making positions. Beyond these significant events, however, the numbers tell us that Latin America is still far from attaining gender parity.

To understand the complex state of women's political participation, it is crucial to examine the institution in which, as a rule in modern democracies, those who aspire to public office begin and develop their political careers: political parties. These organizations are the "gatekeepers" of politics that determine who will be included on the candidate slates offered to voters.

Because of the lack of reliable data about women's participation in Latin American political parties, in 2009 the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), through its Program for the Support of Women's Leadership and Representation (PROLEAD), and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) gathered objective and verifiable information about the activities of the 94 political parties in Latin America with the highest levels of representation in their respective legislatures. The Gender and Political Parties in Latin America database (GEPPAL) was created using the data obtained ([www.iadb.org/research/geppal](http://www.iadb.org/research/geppal)).

### Instruments for promoting gender equality in parties: From words to deeds

If we take the use of language reflecting the principles of gender equality in party instruments as an indicator of the importance placed on the presence of women in the political life of political parties and society, the data show that there is a long way to go. Nearly one-third of the Latin American parties surveyed make no mention of the principles of gender equality or equity and non-discrimination.

Although most of the political parties have women's units, their participation is limited and they have little influence on party decisions. In the parties surveyed, less than half of these units have direct representation on the party's executive body, and less than one-third participate in the drafting of candidate lists or the preparation of government plans. Only 15 percent of the parties regularly allocate budgets to cover the basic operating expenses of the women's units. This limits the ability of such units to design and

implement long-term strategies and activities to promote gender equality.

Only Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico and Panama currently have national legislation that requires parties to allocate a proportion of the public funds they receive to training women and promoting their political participation.

#### More power, fewer women

Information gathered through the surveys confirms that few women hold senior posts in the organizational structures of political parties. In fact, women's participation follows a clearly pyramidal pattern: there are many women at the base, but very few at the top. As power increases, the number of women decreases.

On average, women make up approximately 51 percent of active party members in the seven countries for which data are available. In 2009, however, only 16 percent of party presidents or secretaries general were women.

The ability of women to promote a gender equality agenda is limited by the fact that they occupy only 19 percent of the seats on national executive committees (NECs), where they are relegated to the least powerful positions. Men generally hold the most senior or powerful positions (president, secretary general, economic secretary, programming secretary, etc.). Women tend to occupy less influential positions, such as minutes secretary, archivists, or director of training or culture.

#### Selection of candidates for the legislature and members of party decision-making bodies

The rules and procedures used by political parties to choose their candidates for the legislature and internal decision-making bodies have important consequences for the make-up of these bodies. These rules affect the gender composition of internal decision-making bodies and the options offered to voters at the ballot box.

The study shows that more women are included on candidate lists through processes that combine various selection methods (mixed) than through primary elections. It is important to study these mixed processes further, however, in order to understand how they benefit women.

Nationally mandated and voluntary quotas have a positive impact on the proportion of women candidates standing for the legislature. Despite the significant effect that a quota

can have on the inclusion of women on candidate lists, the political will of the parties and effective enforcement of the law still play crucial roles.

Nationally mandated quota laws for internal party decision-making bodies have a smaller, albeit still significant, effect on women's participation in NECs. This could be because quotas for decision-making bodies are not monitored as closely by electoral authorities as quotas for candidates for the legislature and, in nearly all cases, the laws do not include crucial mechanisms, such as sanctions, to enforce their implementation.

#### Candidate lists and the election of women: Far from parity

The political parties that were studied had few women in parliamentary seats. On average, women held 19 percent of the seats in the lower house or a unicameral legislature and 15 percent of seats in the upper house. In addition, very few women served as party caucus leaders or spokespersons. Only 11 percent of these positions were held by women in the lower house and 7 percent in the upper house. Only 20 percent of parliamentary commissions were led by women.

The candidate lists offered to voters also lacked gender balance. On average, only one in every four candidates was a woman. In addition, only 14 percent of the lists were headed by a woman, and in countries with no legal quotas parties tended to place more women at the bottom of the candidate lists.

In the countries included in the sample, the existence of quota mandates was decisive for the inclusion of more women on candidate lists. Women represented, on average, 25 percent of the candidates for the lower house or unicameral legislature in countries with quotas, compared to 19 percent in countries without quotas. For the upper house, the share of women candidates on party lists was 31 percent in countries with quotas and 19 percent in those without.

In the countries without legal quotas, voluntary quotas adopted by political parties for female legislative candidates for the legislature made a significant difference. The parties with such quotas nominated more women (29 percent) than those without voluntary quotas (18 percent).

Quotas have a positive impact on the election of women as long as they are well designed, which means they must be compatible with the electoral system and there must be

clear penalties for non-compliance. In addition, more women are elected when closed and blocked lists with position mandates are used. In countries where these conditions exist, the number of women elected per party increases.

This study concludes with a series of recommendations on strategies to promote the participation of women in decision-making spheres of political parties and public life in Latin America, and to address the low level of women's inclusion in national and party structures.

## Introduction

In the three decades since Latin America's return to democracy, significant progress has been made on women's political participation. At the highest executive level, two countries, Chile and Argentina, elected women democratically to the presidency in 2007,<sup>1</sup> and women served as prime minister in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Costa Rica and Brazil elected their first women presidents in 2010, the fifth and sixth women, respectively, to be democratically elected to the position in the region.<sup>2</sup> Under the leadership of President Bachelet, Chile became the first country in the Americas and the third in the world, after Spain and Sweden, to achieve gender parity in its cabinet. Between 1998 and 2008, the number of female government ministers in Latin America more than doubled over the number in the previous decade (Luna et al., 2008). Similarly, the proportion of women elected to the legislature increased from an average of 5 percent in 1990 to 20 percent in 2010 (PROLID, 2010).

Despite this significant progress, the proportion of women in elected office remains far below parity and in many countries, women lack the critical mass needed to bring about substantive change in the political arena. The figures also conceal significant variations within and among countries. In Argentina, for example, in 2009 women held around 40 percent of the seats in the lower house of Congress, while in Colombia they held only 8 percent. Another factor to consider on the road to parity is that the growth in the number of women in positions of power is skewed within the population in many Latin American countries because indigenous women and those of African descent are significantly underrepresented at all levels of government, even in countries with a large indigenous or afro-descendant population. Finally, progress has not been linear and progressive, but volatile and uncertain, because ground gained in one election has often been lost at the next.

Why is there such underrepresentation of women in elected office and variation in the number of women elected from country to country? In exploring responses to this complex question, in addition to examining social and cultural factors, many academics have focused on institutional variables, including the effects of the political and electoral system on women's participation. For example, scholars have found that more women are elected under electoral systems of proportional representation than in majority systems (Rule, 1987, 1994; Norris, 1985), that women are more likely to be elected in large, plurinominal electoral districts (Matland and Brown, 1992; Rule, 1994; Lovenduski,

1997) and that legislative quotas have a significantly positive impact on the number of women elected (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson, 2006; Jones, 2009; Schwindt-Bayer, 2009; Krook, 2005).

Other studies of women's political participation have focused on supply and demand. Evidence from Latin America, however, suggests that the bottleneck for women's political participation lies neither in the supply of eligible women nor in voter demand. Instead, the bottleneck blocking the election of more women to public office appears to lie within political parties, where models of participation are predominantly male and disinclined to promote women's leadership. The situation is even worse for indigenous women and those of African descent, who suffer triple discrimination because of their gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status.

Political parties play a key role in determining the number of women in elected office because they are responsible for recruiting and selecting candidates for decision-making positions. Parties determine who will reach positions of power because they decide who will be included on candidate lists and the order in which they appear. They are therefore considered the main "gatekeepers" of women's progress toward parity. Parties also play a key role in expressing, aggregating and legitimizing interests in government. They formulate strategies, goals and policies, and promote the interests of their voters. They should therefore play an important role in representing women's strategic priorities and concerns. On gender, however, they do not take a neutral stance.

Historically, the integration of women into political parties occurred not because of an inherent conviction about their political rights or out of a desire to incorporate specific gender interests, but as part of an electoral calculation to increase parties' bases of political support (Alvarez, 1986). Female members of political parties generally had little or no power or voice in party structures. In the past two decades, however, various political parties in Latin America took steps to support women's political participation as a result of efforts by feminist movements and the increased influence of women in party leadership positions. Some parties adopted gender quotas for legislative candidates and internal decision-making positions, modified their processes for selecting candidates to make them more democratic and offered special training for women candidates and members (Llanos and Sample, 2008a; Caul Kittilson, 2006). Political parties have responded in different ways to demands for gender equality. Not all have taken positive steps, and those that have taken them have done so with different degrees of commitment and compliance. As a result, parties differ in the number of female candidates on their slates and the number of women holding leadership positions in their executive bodies.



It is important to note that the aim of men and women equally sharing representative positions, especially in the legislature, is not just a matter of democratic justice. It seeks to take advantage of the human resources in a section of the population that is increasingly qualified and, because of their life experiences, more sensitive to certain issues. Several studies have found significant differences in the political priorities of female legislators, especially in areas related to the rights of women, children and the family (Swers, 2002; Jones, 1997; Schwindt-Bayer, 2005). Theories such as “critical mass” indicate that an increase in the number of women in institutions can lead to a “qualitative change in power relationships that for the first time allow the minority to use the organization’s resources to improve their own situation and that of the group to which they belong” (Valcárcel, 1997: 176, cited in Osborne, 2008). Such theories usually place the proportion of women needed to achieve a critical mass at around 30 percent.

To identify the constraints and opportunities for defining courses of action and gender strategies, it is important to understand the current state of women’s representation and participation in political parties as well as the factors that determine political parties’ degree of commitment and responses to specific gender demands. Because of the shortage of reliable data for this type of analysis, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), through its Program for the Support of Women’s Leadership and Representation (PROLEAD), and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) launched a regional study of political party characteristics that influence women’s opportunities for participating in politics and promoting a gender equality agenda. The IDB and International IDEA contracted consultants in 18 Latin American countries to gather objective, verifiable information about the main areas of party action and carry out a supplementary survey of leaders representing 94 political parties.<sup>3</sup> The data were gathered between 15 January and 15 October 2009.<sup>4</sup> The information is available in the Gender and Political Parties in Latin America (GEPPAL) database, which was created using the comparative data that was gathered ([www.iadb.org/research/geppal](http://www.iadb.org/research/geppal)).

The analysis presented in this study is based on information available in the GEPPAL database. Chapter 1 examines the mechanisms adopted by political parties to promote and support women’s participation in political parties and positions of elected office. These mechanisms include the establishment of women’s branches within parties, the organization of training courses and the inclusion of women’s interests in party and policy platforms. Chapter 2 explores women’s participation as active members of political parties’ organizational structures, decision-making bodies and senior leadership. Chapter 3 analyzes the selection processes used by political parties and their impact on

the proportion of women candidates included on candidate slates for legislative elections, as well as women's participation in political parties' power structures. Chapter 4 examines some of the obstacles faced by women in political parties in gaining access to parliamentary seats as "aspiring candidates" and "selected candidates," with special emphasis on the type of electoral system and its characteristics, as well as the impact of quotas. The concluding chapter summarizes the study's main conclusions and makes recommendations on promoting women's participation and representation in political parties in the region.

## I. Instruments for promoting gender equality in political parties: From words to deeds

One of the strategic objectives for achieving women's equality included in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action was taking "measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making".<sup>5</sup> The Beijing Platform placed particular emphasis on the measures that should be taken by political parties, calling for an examination of their structures and procedures in order to eliminate barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against women's participation. It also urged political parties to establish initiatives for women to participate in all decision-making structures, including the party leadership and appointment and election processes.

More than a decade later, in 2007, the 24 governments represented at the Tenth Regional Conference on Women of Latin America and the Caribbean adopted the "Quito Consensus" and agreed to develop permanent policies to mainstream gender in party policies, activities and statutes, and to ensure equitable participation, empowerment and leadership to achieve gender parity as a state policy. Political parties were asked to take positive steps and implement strategies (communication, financing and training) and internal organizational reforms to achieve parity in women's participation in political organizations.<sup>6</sup>

Over the past two decades, political parties have implemented various strategies to promote women's equitable participation. Lovenduski and Norris (1993) classify strategies for promoting women's participation in parties and in elections into three categories: rhetorical, positive action and positive discrimination. Rhetorical strategies are declarations made in party rules and procedures, electoral programs, parliamentary resolutions and public statements by political leaders aimed at promoting women's inclusion. Positive action strategies include the training of women as party members or candidates, the provision of financial incentives and the establishment of specific organizational bodies to promote women's participation. They also include any campaign carried out for that purpose. Positive discrimination includes measures such as gender quotas for internal party structures or candidate lists.

Using this classification, this chapter reviews the progress made on gender equality in parties' organizational instruments from a rhetorical standpoint, focusing on internal rules and procedures. It contrasts their language with the effective mechanisms and

incentives being implemented by the political parties in our sample to encourage the inclusion of women in party life and as potential candidates for elected office. We focus on the creation of specific organizational bodies for women and the existence of training programs for women. Positive discrimination mechanisms are addressed in chapter III and chapter IV.

## 1. Gender equality rhetoric in party instruments

According to Verge, “commitment to women’s representation in a party’s rhetoric can be the start of a process that leads to broader policies for inclusion in the organization and the incorporation of this demand into the political agenda” (Verge, 2007: 158). The inclusion of such language in party instruments can be an initial indicator of the importance placed on the presence of women in political life, both in political parties and in the national political arena. For many years, women in political parties in Latin America have struggled to enshrine the principles of gender equality in party rules and procedures and documents.

In recent years, however, a significant number of political parties in Latin America have included pro-gender-equality rhetoric in their manifestos and programs. According to an analysis of party by-laws carried out as part of this study, at the aggregate level, 70 percent of the parties mention principles of gender equality or non-discrimination. Although 30 percent make no such reference, it is possible that such principles are stated in other organizational documents, such as statements, manifestos and party programs.

What internal factors could explain why some parties adopt gender-equality language in their by-laws and others do not? In our sample, there is a positive and statistically significant correlation between the percentage of women serving on National Executive Committees (NECs) and the inclusion of gender equality language in party by-laws. Although this does not demonstrate causality, the results suggest that having more women on parties’ national committees could influence the inclusion of gender equality/non-discrimination language in party by-laws.<sup>7</sup> Party ideology could also influence the inclusion of gender equality principles in party by-laws. According to our analysis, however, there is no statistically significant relationship between party ideology<sup>8</sup> and gender equality rhetoric. Finally, it is important to note cases such as that of Costa Rica, where 100 percent of the parties analyzed referred specifically to equality and/or gender equity, partly because the 2009 election law requires parties to incorporate gender equality principles into their by-laws. The law also requires parties to include quota mechanisms and to allocate public financing for training and support programs for women.

It is important to note that the gender equality principles mentioned in organizational documents can be a crucial tool for women when it comes to demanding that parties meet their commitments and translate their words into concrete actions to include women in party structures (Lovenduski and Norris, 1993). The existence of such provisions can give women “statutory legitimacy” when they present and negotiate on their demands with other sectors in a party.

## 2. Positive action: Organizational units, gender requirements for financing and training

### a. Women’s units in political parties: An uncertain scenario

Since their founding, many political parties in the region have institutionalized structures for women in their party rules and procedures, as well as bodies to represent youth, workers and trade unionists, professional groups, and, in some exceptional cases, different ethnic and cultural groups. In this study, 92 percent (80/87) of the parties surveyed stated that they had a women’s/gender unit. According to an analysis of the party rules (by-laws and/or organic charters), however, a smaller percentage (76 percent, 69/89) expressly calls for the creation of such internal organizational structures.<sup>9</sup> The difference between these percentages could mean that a significant number of parties have decided that it is necessary and useful to have a women’s unit even if it is not mandated by party rules.

Because of the prevalence of these bodies, it is important to examine how they are viewed and what role they play in their organizations. Women’s units have historically been viewed from a traditional standpoint in which the reproductive and domestic roles assigned to women in private life are reproduced in political party life. Nonetheless, many women’s units operate as active arms of the political party, mobilizing women voters and providing logistical support – especially during campaigns. The idea of these bodies has changed in the past two decades, thanks to efforts by women committed to gender equality and the support of party leaders (Llanos and Sample, 2008a). Many women’s units have become technical secretariats, seen as bodies for promoting gender equality and monitoring party commitments to gender equality, advising the party on gender policies and educating party members on the importance of these issues, and organizing women politically from the standpoint of equal rights and opportunities. Their operational capacity and political weight depend on the specific configuration of their stakeholders, their degree of coordination and their mobilization dynamics (Sacchet, 2005, 2009).

Studies have shown that these units often lack the support of their parties, and that their role is often limited to symbolic functions because they do not have a clear mandate or resources for action. An assessment by the National Democratic Institute (2006) found that women's units in the region often are either inactive or barely function because of the lack of a defined structure or work plan. In some cases, they get a "bad reputation" because of their feminist rhetoric or the lack of regular turnover among their leadership, among other things. The study also found that there was a dislocation between the units and women leaders in the party, and between women leaders and grassroots members, as well as symptoms of internal competition and antagonism; and that the party does not allocate the units their own funds, which limits them to a nominal role. Section 2 discusses these data and some of the challenges that shed light on the role women's units in political parties.

— *Leadership*

About 92 percent (80/87) – a large percentage – of the parties surveyed stated that they have a coordinator of the gender/women's unit or branch: 68 percent (54/79) said that the holder of this position is elected internally and 23 percent (18/79) said that the person was appointed internally. This has implications for their degree of power and influence, although the difference between an elected coordinator and one who is appointed internally depends on how each party functions. In theory, an elected women's secretary has gone through an internal nomination process and an election, giving her greater legitimacy and support when it comes to promoting a gender equality agenda. The appointment of a coordinator at the discretion of the appointing authority, whether individual or collective, could create a disconnect between the coordinator and party members and give the coordinator little autonomy for promoting a gender equality agenda. A direct connection with the leadership that appoints the coordinator could provide a more direct route into the party's decision-making circles, which might be less true for a person elected by party members.

— *The scope and influence of the women's branch*

Reflecting their limited participation in party decisions, our research shows that an average of 41 percent (28/68) of the parties with party bylaws that mention a women's or gender unit do not give that body direct representation on their executive body. Only 25 percent (17/69) of the parties gave the women's unit a specific vote on budget issues,

while 33 percent (23/69) gave it a vote on the formation of candidate lists and 35 percent (24/69) on drafting government plans.

Surprisingly, a large majority (90 percent) of the parties that responded to the survey question (87 percent of the sample) stated that their women's units participate in the development of the programs for government to be presented by the party in election campaigns.

#### b. The use of party resources to mainstream gender

The lack of financial support to launch a political candidacy is a significant barrier that women must overcome in order to participate in electoral politics. Passing laws to ensure that political parties allocate a certain percentage of their public funding to activities to promote women's political participation is therefore particularly important. Much remains to be done in this area. Although 16 of the 18 countries studied have statutory public financing for political parties, only Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico and Panama make it a requirement that some of these funds are used to increase women's capacity and promote their political participation (see Table 1).<sup>10</sup>

In Mexico, reforms to the Federal Electoral Institutions and Procedures Code (*Código Federal de Instituciones y Procedimiento Electoral*, COFIPE), which took effect in 2008, require political parties to earmark 2 percent of their ordinary public funding each year for training, promotion and the development of women's political leadership and to keep a specific account of these expenditures. Nevertheless, none of the parties surveyed in Mexico includes in its party bylaws a requirement to allocate a minimum percentage of public funding to activities targeting women. Only the Partido Convergencia committed, in general terms, to guarantee "support in resources" for women to promote gender equality. Mexico's Unit for the Oversight of Political Party Resources (*Unidad de Fiscalización de los Recursos de los Partidos Políticos*, UFRPP) found that political parties reported only general expenditures in their annual reports for 2008 that made no specific mention of activities targeting women.<sup>11</sup>

In Costa Rica, the Law for the Promotion of Social Equality, which took effect in 1990, requires political parties to allocate a percentage of their public funding to promote women's political training and participation. The most recent reform of the Electoral Code, in 2009, required parties to include in their party rules and procedures that:

The political party's training activities must be ongoing and characterized by parity for men and women, with the goal of training, educating and promoting knowledge of

human rights, ideology and gender equality, and encouraging leadership, political participation, empowerment, running for office and holding decision-making positions, among other things.<sup>12</sup>

Costa Rica's legislation has therefore progressed, establishing the purpose of this financing and making equal participation by women mandatory in activities financed with such resources. As of 2009, when the fieldwork for this study was carried out, all the political parties in the Costa Rican sample included such provisions in their party bylaws. Parties allocated between 20 and 40 percent of the budget for training for women. Unidad Social Cristiana was the only political party that did not specify the percentage to be earmarked for training for women – the NEC set the minimum percentage in consultation with the Women's Unit.<sup>13</sup>

Panama modified its Electoral Code in 2002, requiring that of the 25 percent of public funding received by political parties for training, 10 percent must be allocated to training women. As Arce (2008: 6) notes, however, resources for training are usually used for organizational activities and proselytizing. In addition, because laws on political parties are generally not enforced, in practice funds are not distributed as the law requires. Of the political parties surveyed, only the Partido Panameñista's party rules and procedures called for a minimum of 30 percent of the training budget from state financing to be used to promote women's political training and participation.<sup>14</sup>

In 2009, Brazil changed its public financing law to require that at least 5 percent of the state subsidy is assigned to the development and maintenance of programs that promote women's political participation. Any party that fails to comply must increase party funds for such programs by 2.5 percent the following year. The law also establishes that state-subsidized party propaganda must promote women's political participation. The amount of media time devoted to women is to be agreed by the national leadership of the political party, but cannot be less than 10 percent of the total time.<sup>15</sup>

Table 1: Public financing and gender equity: Measures adopted in Latin America

Country	Year approved	Measures adopted in national legislation	Measures adopted in party by-laws	
Brazil	2009	Directed public contribution (minimum 5%) Space in free band in the media (minimum 10%). Of total time allocated in the band, at least 10% must be for women.		

CONTINÚA →



Table 1: Public financing and gender equity: Measures adopted in Latin America

Country	Year approved	Measures adopted in national legislation	Measures adopted in party by-laws	
Costa Rica	1990	Public resources received must be used to promote women's political participation and training.	Partido Liberación Nacional	At least 10% of party budget to be assigned to promoting women's political formation. The Political Education Secretariat oversees compliance with this provision, in coordination with the president of the Movimiento de Mujeres Liberacionistas.
	2009	Parity participation by men and women in training in gender equality (among other topics).	Partido Acción Ciudadana	20% of the budget dedicated to training and not less than 15% of the total to training for women and youth.
			Movimiento Libertario	The Training Secretariat will dedicate no less than 40% of the budget distributed by the National Executive Committee, among other goals, to emphasize training that contributes to women party members' political participation and training.
			Unidad Social Cristiana	The Executive Committee determines the minimum percentage of public funding to be dedicated to women's training and organization.
Mexico	2007	Each political party must allocate 2% of its annual public funding to training, promotion and political leadership development for women. Parties must assign 25% of	Partido Convergencia	The party acknowledges the principle of equality and equity for women party members and values their plans, guaranteeing them support in resources and access to air time on radio and television.
Panama	2002	public and electoral funding to educational activities, 10% of which must be allocated to training for women.	Partido Panameñista	At least 30% of the training budget from public funding will be used to promote women's political training and participation.

Despite the existence of national legislation, only 67 percent of the 82 parties that answered questions about this topic stated that the women's or gender unit has its own budget allocated by the party. Of the 56 parties that answered this question, 56 percent stated that the budget for the Women's/Gender Unit is used for one-time activities, indicating that the funds are more transitory. Only 15 percent of the parties have regular line item allocations to cover the basic operating expenses of these units, and nearly 30 percent use both methods.<sup>16</sup>

### c. Training: A valuable resource

Despite the progress made in the past two decades, such as the integration of the principle of gender equality into party rules and the acceptance of specific affirmative action mechanisms, efforts to ensure women's quantitative participation in the political

arena have not been enough to create a critical mass of women's participation. At election time, some political parties with established quota mechanisms still claim that there are not enough women with leadership skills, specific qualifications, experience and visibility (Llanos and Sample, 2008b).

Illustrating the marked disparity between men and women in the race for elected office, Bernal Olarte (2006) states that women face "obstacles from the outset" in their efforts to participate on an equal footing with men – obstacles that translate into "the lack of a set of skills, knowledge and opportunities for entering the political game". We understand this lack of skills as a lack of experience rather than a lack of political competence on the part of women.

Faced with such obstacles, women need certain capacity building resources to reinforce their opportunities to participate in elections and strengthen their executive skills once they reach public decision-making positions, to enable them to act as substantive representatives of women's interests (Piscopo, 2006). This refers, first, to women's background and skills, so they can attain decision-making positions; and, second, to their willingness, awareness and inclination to include the defense of women's interests and needs among their plans once in power. Incentives for women's participation in political parties are crucial, and include opportunities for training, mentoring and exchanging ideas either on a regular basis or at specific times associated with the political cycle.

Nearly all the parties surveyed (98 percent; 85/87) affirmed that they provide training for their members and supporters. More than one-fourth (23/83) indicated that they hold training sessions relatively frequently (at least every three months). The interviewees also stated that the content of the training courses was strongly oriented toward matters of party doctrine (93 percent; 76/82) and political campaigns (85 percent; 72/85), followed by gender equality (66 percent; 61/83) and public policy (75 percent; 61/81). Although, according to those surveyed, gender equality was one of the issues most often addressed in training, mainstreaming gender in all their doctrines and activities is a new challenge for political parties in order to put equality at the top of the political agenda and make further changes in the relationships between men and women (López, 2007). This is a process that should be encouraged by women's units and be aimed at both men and women.

Seventy-seven percent (65/84) of the political parties stated that they usually hold training courses for their members and supporters.<sup>17</sup> In addition, 26 percent (20/76) of the parties surveyed stated that they earmark a specific budget for training women. A relatively high percentage of parties said they had held specific training for women

during the most recent elections (65 percent; 56/86).<sup>18</sup> As is noted above, however, in most countries there is no legal obligation to earmark funds from the party's public financing for the promotion of women's political participation and capacity building. This means that there is a risk that such processes may not continue in the long term because of a lack of resources. Nevertheless, there are successful examples of inter-party capacity building efforts for women in various countries, something that should not be overlooked (Llanos and Sample, 2008a). In addition to building skills, these opportunities promote solidarity among women and help to build common, pro-equality agendas that go beyond partisan ideological differences.

In terms of the relative importance that the parties in this study give to different mechanisms for promoting the election of their male and female candidates, training is the mechanism most often used. On average, approximately 68 percent (56/83) of the parties across all the countries studied use training as their main mechanism, and they strongly target women and youth. The survey shows that, of the other mechanisms considered in our analysis, economic incentives are used least frequently by parties to give women and youth greater visibility and promote their candidacies (7 percent; 5/76). Mentoring is used by 24 percent (18/76) of the parties and a very small proportion of parties (16 percent; 13/77) use other mechanisms, such as incentives based on performance.

In conclusion:

- If the inclusion of language based on principles of equality and non-discrimination in party documents is used as a prime indicator of women's importance in the political life of parties and society, the data show that there is a long way to go. Nearly one-third of the Latin American parties surveyed make no mention of the principles of gender equality or equity and non-discrimination.
- Although most of the parties have women's units, these have little participation in or influence on party decisions. Less than half of the units in the parties surveyed have direct representation on the party's executive body, and less than one-third participate in the development of candidate lists or government plans. Barely 15 percent of the parties allocate a regular budget or funds to the women's units for their organic functions, which limits their ability to design and implement long-range strategies and activities to promote gender equality.
- Only Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico and Panama currently have national legislation requiring parties to allocate part of their public funding to promote women's political participation and capacity building. In the two cases for which

information exists (Mexico and Panama), the studies indicate that funds are not generally allocated to promote women's political participation. It is therefore necessary to develop and reinforce monitoring mechanisms for both the election officials who oversee parties' actions and party members themselves to guarantee that resources are used effectively and appropriately to reinforce women's political participation.

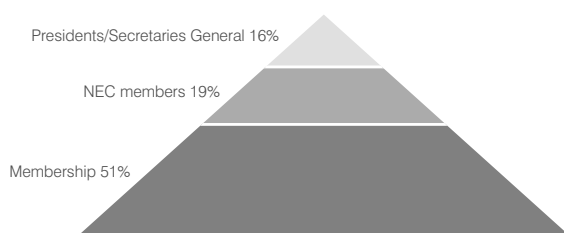
- Most parties state that they offer training for women candidates and workshops that address gender equity. A smaller number provide women candidates with other mechanisms to strengthen their electoral campaigns and their advocacy skills once they are in public office, such as economic incentives, mentoring, and ensuring that women candidates have media visibility.

## II. Women in political parties: As power increases, women's presence diminishes

To make progress on gender equity within political parties and in national public policy, it is important to address the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in political parties and movements. Party leaders and members of the political party decision-making bodies oversee the selection of candidates, as well as plans and public policies once the candidates take office, and also often select the leaders of the legislature. Members of National Executive Committees (NECs) are responsible for implementing the agreements and resolutions adopted by the party's national assembly and monitoring compliance with party rules and procedures and national election laws. It is therefore crucial that women serve on NECs in order to play their part in ensuring compliance with quota laws when parties select candidates for the legislature, influence the make-up of candidate lists, monitor the party budget to ensure that it complies with gender-related commitments, represent women's interests in decision-making spheres and promote mechanisms and oversee policies to encourage gender equality. Having more women on NECs is crucial to help change the organizational culture of political parties, which has historically excluded women and been dominated by a masculine model of power that limits women's influence.

The survey shows that few women hold senior positions in the organizational structures of political parties. Women's participation follows a clearly pyramidal pattern: there are significant numbers at the bottom but few at the top. As power increases, the number of women decreases.

Figure 1: Women in party organization: regional averages



In the seven countries for which there are data, women represent an average of 51 percent of the party membership. The proportion ranges from 36 percent in Guatemala to 54 percent in Mexico (see Table 2). Unfortunately, few political parties, electoral tribunals or commissions in Latin America break down their membership data by sex.

The lack of such information makes it difficult to analyze the effect that a larger or smaller number of active women party members has on areas such as the gender policies adopted or implemented, the influence of women's units, and the gendered make-up of party decision-making bodies. Such data is also important for designing policies and monitoring women's progress, and can become a negotiating tool for women in their efforts to participate in party and electoral politics.

Table 2: Party membership by sex, 2009 (weighted average)

Country	Women members (%)	Range (%)	Number of parties
Argentina	52	51-53	5
Chile	48	44-53	3
Dominican Republic	36	28-42	5
Guatemala	54	47-57	3
Mexico	47	44-48	4
Paraguay	47	36-52	5
Peru	48	44-50	2
Average	51	28-57	27

Weight: Total number of party members.

Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on the following sources: Argentina – National Electoral Chamber (Cámara Nacional Electoral); Chile – data provided by parties; Guatemala – Supreme Electoral Tribunal (Tribunal Supremo Electoral); Mexico – data provided by parties; Paraguay – Superior Tribunal of Electoral Justice (Tribunal Superior de Justicia Electoral); Peru – National Election Board (Jurado Nacional de Elecciones); Dominican Republic – data provided by parties.

Compiled by the authors.

In 2009, barely 16 percent of party presidents or secretaries general were women (see Table 3). Only eight of 75 parties had a woman president, and four of 76 had a woman secretary-general. None had women in the top two posts at the same time.

Table 3: Parties led by women presidents or secretaries-general, 2009

Country	Woman president	Woman secretary general
Bolivia	Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR)	Frente de Unidad Nacional (UN)
Brazil	Partido del Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (PMDB)	
Costa Rica		Acción Ciudadana (AC)
Honduras	Partido Liberal de Honduras	Partido Innovación y Unidad Socialdemócrata (PINU-SD)
Mexico	Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)	Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD)
Panama	Partido Revolucionario Democrático (PRD)	
Paraguay	Asociación Nacional Republicana (ANR)	
Peru	Partido Popular Cristiano (PPC)	
Uruguay	Vertiente Artiguista – Frente Amplio	

Sources: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on information provided during interviews.

Compiled by the authors.

Across the region, on average, only 19 percent of NEC members were women (see Table 4). At the national level, Chile and Panama had, on average, the lowest levels of female participation in their NECs (13 percent), and Costa Rica had the highest (41 percent). At the party level, the proportion of women on NECs ranged from zero (Renovación Nacional in Chile and Partido Cambio Radical in Colombia) to 60 percent (Movimiento al Socialismo, MAS, in Bolivia).

Table 4: Proportion of women on NECs, 2009 (weighted average)

Country	Women on NECs (average %)	Range (%)	Number of parties
Argentina	17	12–44	5
Bolivia	40	25–60	3
Brazil	16	8–33	8
Chile	13	0–20	6
Colombia	34	0–39	4
Costa Rica	41	25–50	4
Dominican Republic	14	13–16	3
Ecuador	17	7–50	5
El Salvador	25	23–27	2
Guatemala	16	9–25	5
Honduras	38	31–46	5
Mexico	23	12–50	5
Nicaragua	20	14–22	3
Panama	13	7–20	5
Paraguay	16	13–26	5
Peru	31	25–43	5
Uruguay	19	0–39	8
Venezuela	21	11–32	3
Average	19	0–60	84

Weight: Total number of men and women on NECs.

Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on information provided during interviews.

Compiled by the authors.

The ability of women to promote a gender equality agenda is limited not only by the lack of a critical mass of women at strategic levels in parties, but also because those who hold leadership positions on NECs are relegated to the least powerful positions in party structures. The division of labor within parties generally reflects the traditional sexual division of labor, which confines women to the domestic and family spheres. As a reflection of this phenomenon, women elected or appointed to decision-making positions within party structures have historically been assigned to education and social welfare committees, where their role is an “extension” of their traditional role as mothers and caretakers (Caul Kittilson, 2006). These committees tend to have less power and prestige, compared to the economic, electoral affairs and public relations committees.

A rough analysis of the positions held by women in the NECs of the parties sampled confirms that there are fewer women than men in positions of power.<sup>19</sup> In 2009, women headed the NEC in only eight of the parties analyzed, while only 13 women held the second most important NEC position.<sup>20</sup> In only the Partido Liberal in Honduras were both the presidency and vice-presidency held by women.

Women are also underrepresented in the most important NEC commissions. In our study sample, only two women led their parties' economic commissions and only three coordinated oversight bodies. The majority of women in the NECs tend to participate as members, without a specific title. A significant number of women serve as representatives of women's units (25) within the NECs, while a considerable number of parties (11) have named women to head their international relations committees. In eight parties, the secretariats in charge of maintaining minutes and records are headed by women. In the other cases, women participate in NEC commissions in areas such as education, racial equality, communication, indigenous peoples, youth, culture, the environment and capacity-building. In short, although women are not entirely absent from top NEC positions, men usually hold the most senior or powerful positions (president, secretary-general, economic secretary, programming secretary, etc.). Women tend to hold less influential positions, such as secretary of minutes and records or director of training or culture.

While there continues to be an inadequate number of women on the NECs of political parties, and women do not hold key decision-making positions and fail to achieve the critical mass needed to change the organizational culture of these parties, the ability of women to participate in and influence the composition of candidate lists and the number of women elected will remain limited. This will not only affect gender equality, but also limit the ability of parties to represent the interests of all citizens, which is their fundamental role.

In sum:

- Although women constitute, on average, more than 50 percent of party membership, they generally do not hold senior party positions. In 2009, on average, 16 percent of party presidents and secretaries-general were women.
- The ability of women to continue to promote a gender equality agenda is limited by the fact that they hold only 19 percent of the seats on NECs and are generally relegated to the least powerful positions on such bodies. In 2009, women headed NECs in only eight of the parties in this study, and only 13 women held the second-highest position in the NEC. In general, women hold the less influential positions, such as minutes secretary or director of training or culture.



# Selection processes for candidates for elected office and members of party decision-making bodies

The rules and procedures adopted by political parties for selecting their candidates for the legislature and their internal decision-making bodies have important consequences for the make-up of parliaments and party structures (Gallagher, 1988). These rules influence the gender composition of the internal decision-making bodies of political parties and the choices offered to voters at election time. As a result, the behavior of political parties affects the likelihood that certain interests will be represented and particular policies and laws will be adopted (Hazan, 2002).

This chapter analyzes the effects of selection rules and procedures on the proportion of women candidates fielded by parties and the proportion of women elected to the National Executive Committees (NEC) of political parties. Using a sample of Latin American political parties, it examines the effect of formal and informal selection rules and discusses the impact of candidate selection processes on women's political participation.

## 1. Background: Formal rules and selection processes

Political parties can choose to establish formal, explicit rules for selecting their candidates for the legislature and members of internal decision-making bodies. In a highly institutionalized process, candidate registration is defined by internal party rules that are "detailed, explicit, standardized, implemented by party officials and authorized in party documents" (Lovenduski and Norris, 1993: 322). A rule-oriented selection process can be expected to benefit women, as it allows outsiders to understand how the process works and what will be expected of them (Czudnowski, 1975, cited by Caul, 1999). Moreover, women can hold political parties accountable when selection processes are clear and explicit, ensuring that decisions are made according to the rules. More institutionalized parties also discuss and debate their rules more frequently, giving women a chance to develop strategies for taking advantage of them (Matland, 2004).

Less institutionalized parties have registration processes that are less formal which, although known to participants, have not been explicitly stated. As a result, the process lends itself to patronage, and nominations may be biased toward those with personal connections and access to influential networks. As newcomers, and in comparison with men, women tend to lack political capital and access to such networks. In theory, however, one advantage of patronage systems is their informal and flexible nature. If

party leaders want to promote gender equality, they can do so quickly and deliberately by placing women on party lists or in better positions on lists, or by adopting measures for promoting women. As Htun (2002) proposes, parties with fewer rules could have greater opportunities to adapt and respond to women's demands. Nevertheless, Norris and Lovenduski (1995) note that without institutional safeguards, progress can be volatile and easily reversed in later elections.

Selection processes can also be measured by the distribution of power and control over the process itself. Such control lies on a continuum of exclusion/inclusion, where the degree of exclusion depends on the number of individuals participating in the selection process.<sup>21</sup> Along this continuum, decisions may be made by the national leaders of the various factions, by regional party organizations or by party members within the electorate (Gallagher, 1988). In an exclusive process, a smaller number of people select the candidates for the party leadership or national executive positions. In a more inclusive process, a larger number of people select the candidates, as is the case with primary elections where registered party members or all eligible voters may make the selection.

Some academics maintain that exclusive selection processes benefit women. Matland and Studlar (1996) argue that when the selection process is exclusive, party leaders may respond to pressure for greater representation, expanding the diversity of candidates nominated to the legislature. If decisions are centralized, party leaders will have a larger number of lists to consider, which will facilitate the inclusion of women. They can also make decisions more quickly and apply them across the board. Women can also pressure party leaders to include more women, rather than having to lobby in each locality. In a study examining the relationship between women's representation and candidate selection processes at the municipal level in Chile and Mexico, Hinojosa (2005) concludes that exclusive selection processes lead to a greater number of women in power, because they neutralize the local power monopolies to which women have less access and avoid self-nomination (women are less likely to nominate themselves). Caul Kittilson (2006) also concludes that exclusive selection processes are more favorable to women.

Other studies have found that more democratic candidate selection processes, such as primaries, can make candidate lists less representative (Roza, 2010; Hazan, 2002; Hinojosa, 2005 and 2009; Baldez, 2004). Women are at a disadvantage in primaries because they generally lack the financial, personal and political resources needed to win a large number of votes (Hinojosa, 2005; Jones, 2004). It is also possible that in primaries, voters pay more attention to the candidate's sex and discriminate against women because, in contrast to general elections, voting a party ticket is irrelevant (Matland and King,

2002, cited in Hinojosa, 2005). Primaries can also mitigate the effect of quotas. Mexico's election law allows parties to skirt the quota requirement if candidates are chosen in a primary election.<sup>22</sup> In Panama, parties can be exempted from the quota law if they do not register enough women for the primaries. It is important to emphasize, however, that quotas are compatible with internal primaries as long as the quota is designed in a way that guarantees its implementation.<sup>23</sup>

## 2. Selection of candidates for the legislature

Using figures from the GEPPAL database, the following sections explore the effect of formal and informal selection rules and different selection processes on women's participation and representation within parties and in the legislature.

### a. Formal vs. informal rules

Approximately 90 percent of the parties in our study sample have specific rules for the candidate selection process. In the case of unicameral legislatures or lower houses, parties that lack formal rules for candidate selection nominate more women to national legislative seats (25 percent) than those that have such rules (23 percent) (see Table 5). Although this finding is unexpected, the difference is not statistically significant.<sup>24</sup> In the case of the upper house, or Senate, parties without formal selection rules register a smaller proportion of women candidates for national legislative seats (21 percent) than parties that have formal rules (24 percent). The difference of three percentage points, however, is not statistically significant. Because neither result is statistically significant, further research and statistical analysis are required to better understand the effects of rules on women's opportunities to participate in selection processes.

Table 5: Proportion of women candidates, by existence of formal rules for candidate selection processes (weighted averages)

	Lower house or unicameral		Upper house/senate	
	Number of parties	Female candidates (%)	Number of parties	Female candidates (%)
With formal rules	66	23.0	33	24.1
Without formal rules	7	24.8	6	20.7


Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on information available in party rules and procedures. Compiled by the authors.

### b. Candidate selection processes: Lower house and unicameral

During the data gathering process for the GEPPAL database, political parties were asked to indicate the type of selection process used in their most recent elections.<sup>25</sup>

Respondents could choose from five options, ranging from inclusive, in which registered party members or all eligible voters could select candidates, to exclusive, in which a small number of people, such as national leaders or the party’s national congress, selected candidates. The interviewees could also choose “other” because some parties use a combination of selection processes.<sup>26</sup>

Table 6: Percentage of women candidates by type of selection process, lower house or unicameral (weighted averages)

Type of selection process			Lower house or unicameral	
			Number of parties	Women candidates (%)
Inclusive  Exclusive	Primaries	Open elections (all eligible voters can vote)	8	24.8
		Closed elections (only party members can participate)	14	24.8
	Regional body	By agreement/vote in an assembly/congress consisting of delegates representing the party’s various territorial branches (regional and local representatives)	26	21.5
	National leadership	By agreement/vote of party’s senior decision-making body	12	17.2
		Designated by party president or secretary-general	1	17.3
Other	Other (combined process)	16	28.2	

Note: No data available for Honduras and the Dominican Republic.  
 Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on information provided during interviews.  
 Compiled by the authors.

Table 6 shows that the parties that combine exclusive and inclusive selection processes register a higher percentage of women candidates for a lower house or a unicameral legislature (28 percent). Parties nominate more candidates to the lower house or unicameral legislature through open or closed primaries (25 percent) than through congresses of regional or local party leaders (22 percent). National or exclusive selection processes nominate the smallest proportion of women candidates to the lower house (17 percent).

The candidate selection process cannot be analyzed without considering the impact of gender quotas. To gain a better understanding of the impact of the various candidate selection processes on the percentage of women nominated to the lower house or a unicameral legislature, we performed a statistical analysis<sup>27</sup> that allowed us to control for the effect of quotas and the existence of formal rules for candidate selection.<sup>28</sup> The results indicate that, compared with primaries, mixed selection processes produce

statistically different results in the number of women candidates. This could indicate that the outcome for women is better in processes that combine different selection methods (mixed) than in the use of primaries. To develop a coherent explanation of this phenomenon, we would have to perform an individual analysis of each political party that used mixed selection processes and examine the breakdown by sex of each electoral list. For example, Partido Social Cristiano in Ecuador elects candidates through a regional assembly but the final list must be ratified by the party's senior decision-making body. It is possible that this provides party leaders with an opportunity to "balance" what might have been an otherwise "unbalanced" ticket. However, without an analysis of the original list produced by the regional assembly, this explanation remains speculative.

Continuing with the results of our statistical analysis, the percentage of women candidates selected in national and regional processes is not statistically different from the proportion chosen in primaries. Nor is the existence of formal rules for candidate selection statistically significant. The existence of gender quotas for candidate selection, however, does have a statistically significant effect. This confirms that quotas have an important impact on the proportion of women candidates fielded by parties for elections to the lower house or to a unicameral legislature.

### c. Candidate selection processes: Upper house

Political parties that hold primary elections register a larger number of women candidates (31 percent) for the upper house than those in which the national leadership (20 percent) or a regional congress (22 percent) choose their candidates. As Table 7 shows, parties that use mixed selection processes also nominate a high percentage of women (29 percent). To gain a better understanding of the effect of the various selection processes on the percentage of women nominated to the upper house, we performed a statistical analysis that allowed us to control for the effect of quotas and the existence of formal rules for candidate selection processes.<sup>29</sup> The results indicate that, compared to primary elections, regional, national and mixed selection processes do not produce statistically different results in the number of women candidates. Nor is the existence of formal rules statistically significant. The existence of gender quotas for candidate selection, however, does have a statistically significant effect. This confirms that quotas have an important impact on the proportion of women candidates fielded by parties for elections to the upper house.

**Table 7:** Percentage of women candidates by type of selection process, upper house/Senate (weighted average)

Type of selection process			Upper house/senate	
			Number of parties	Women candidates (%)
Inclusive ↑ ↓ Exclusive	Primaries	Open elections (all eligible voters can vote)	3	17.1
		Closed elections (only party members can participate)	9	32.9
	Regional body	By agreement/vote in an assembly/congress consisting of delegates representing the party's various territorial branches (regional and local representatives)	8	21.8
	National leadership	By agreement/vote of party's top decision-making body	10	19.0
		Designated by party president or secretary general	3	24.7
Other	Other	10	27.7	

Note: No data available for the Dominican Republic.  
Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on information provided during interviews.  
Compiled by the authors.

### 3. Selection of National Executive Committee members

Reflecting the high levels of inequality in the participation rates of women and men in political party power structures, the study found that women make up a scant 19 percent of NEC members. To address this underrepresentation of women in internal decision-making positions, eight countries have adopted gender quota laws (see Table 8). Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and the Dominican Republic are the only countries without any quota laws for decision-making positions within parties, although they do have quota laws for candidate lists for the legislature.<sup>30</sup> As Table 8 shows, parties that are governed by a national quota law for internal decision-making positions have a larger proportion of women on their NECs (22 percent) than those countries with no such laws (18 percent). The effect of a quota on the number of women on the NEC is statistically significant.<sup>31</sup> Taken together, these findings suggest that quotas contribute to a minimal level of participation by women in their parties' decision-making bodies.

Nevertheless, the percentage of women elected to NECs in countries with quotas (22 percent) is lower than the regional average of the minimum quota established in the various countries at the time the study was carried out.<sup>32</sup> Of the 32 parties in our sample that were governed by a national quota law for decision-making positions, only 12 fulfilled or exceeded the minimum quota. One reason for low levels of quota implementation is that when this study was done, only Costa Rica and Honduras had

sanctions in place for non-compliance. Of the five political parties surveyed in Honduras, all fulfilled or exceeded the minimum quota, which could be explained by the existence of the sanctions for non-compliance adopted in 2004. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal is responsible for oversight and levying a fine of 5 percent of the political public funding on any party that fails to abide by the gender equity policy.<sup>33</sup>

Even though sanctions exist in Costa Rica, only two of the four parties surveyed met the minimum quota. A review of Costa Rica's 1996 quota law for party structures shows that there is no explicit mention of women's participation in national assemblies and executive committees. Article 60 of Law 7653 of 1996 simply establishes that "the delegations of district, canton and provincial assemblies should consist of at least 40 percent women". Sanctions apply only to party registration: "No party can register that has not fulfilled the organizational requirements stipulated in Article 60 of this Code". The electoral tribunal therefore provides oversight at only one point, when the party registers, and not throughout the life of the party. The law's weakness lies in not establishing a system for monitoring the fulfillment of the quota once the party is registered. Costa Rica recently reformed its Electoral Code, adopting more detailed sanctions for non-compliance with the quota for internal decision-making structures. Nonetheless, it does not establish a mechanism for monitoring compliance with the quota throughout the life of the party. According to Law 8765 of 2009:

The General Election Registration Office will not register political parties or party rules and procedures or renew the registration of political parties that fail to comply with the principles of equality, non-discrimination, parity and the mechanism of alternation in the makeup of party structures; nor will it recognize the validity of agreements that violate these principles.

Similarly, in Bolivia, where a significant step was taken to establish the principle of parity in party structures, the new Electoral Regime Law of 2010 does not explicitly provide for sanctions for failure to comply with the quota for party leadership positions. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal, however, has the power to oversee political organizations to ensure that they adapt their internal rules and standing orders, especially in relation to the election of the party leadership and compliance with gender requirements.<sup>34</sup> AAA

Although several countries have penalties in place for failure to comply with quotas for electoral lists, the fact that only Costa Rica and Honduras refer explicitly to sanctions for non-compliance with quota regulations for internal decision-making bodies underscores the important roles that women's units and women party members must play in monitoring gender equality policies.

Table 8: Countries with a national gender quota law for parties' internal decision-making positions

Country	Year approved	Minimum quota	Sanctions for non-compliance
Bolivia*	2010	50%	No
Costa Rica**	2009	50%	Yes
Ecuador***	2008	50%	No
Honduras	2000	30%	Yes
Panamá	2006	30%	No
Paraguay	1990	20%	No
Peru	2003	30%	No
Uruguay****	2009	33%	No

Source: GEPPAL

\*Bolivia: Article 2 of the Electoral Regime Law approved in 2010 establishes parity and alternation in internal election of leaders of political organizations. When the study was carried out, however, the 1999 Parties Law was in effect, establishing a quota of no less than 30 percent at all levels of party leadership.

\*\*Costa Rica: In September 2009, after this study was carried out, reforms to the Electoral code were approved, increasing the quota from 40 percent to 50 percent.

\*\*\*Ecuador: Article 108 of the Constitution establishes that parties' "... organization, structure and functioning will be democratic and will guarantee alternation, accountability and parity between women and men in the make-up of their leadership bodies." The 2009 Organic Electoral Law, however, does not mention sanctions for non-compliance.

\*\*\*\*Uruguay: Quotas were approved after this study was carried out.

Table 9: Proportion of women on NECs, by national quota law for internal decision-making bodies (weighted average)

Gender quotas for NECs	Number of parties	Women on NECs (%)
Regional average	84	18.9
National quota law	32	21.6
Without national quota law	52	17.9

Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on information provided during interviews.  
Compiled by the authors.

In countries where there is no law on national quotas for internal party positions, several parties in the sample have adopted voluntary quotas for their decision-making bodies. Previous research has found that the adoption of quotas may be motivated by pressure from women party members and the women's movement, "contagion effects" following the adoption of quotas by a rival party, efforts to reflect the principle of equality as a value of the organization, strategic calculations to win more votes and support, and pressure from transnational and international actors (Krook, 2005). In this study sample, 19 parties had adopted voluntary quotas for party decision-making bodies but, generally, had no mechanisms for internal oversight.<sup>35</sup> Table 10 shows that 19 percent of NEC positions are held by women in parties with voluntary quotas, compared to 18 percent for parties with no voluntary quotas. These results suggest that voluntary quotas for decision-making bodies do not make a difference and that their effectiveness depends on the political will of the political party.



The lack of a strong impact of voluntary quotas on the proportion of women NEC members could lead to the suspicion that political parties adopt such measures for strategic and practical reasons, and not necessarily because equality is a value that they seek to institutionalize through mechanisms that help to overcome internal inequalities. It would also suggest that women's units lack sufficient power or organization to enforce voluntary quotas. Finally, it is important to emphasize that the vast majority of parties lack a body to oversee quotas, and a system of penalties or other mechanisms to guarantee implementation. The lack of political will, along with a quota designed without sanctions, could therefore contribute to the minimal impact of voluntary quotas on internal decision-making bodies.

Table 10: Proportion of women NEC members, by adoption of voluntary quota for internal decision-making bodies (weighted average)

Gender quotas for NECs	No. of parties	Women on NECs (%)
With voluntary quota	19	18.9
Without voluntary quota	29	17.5

Note: In four cases, no access was given to party bylaws, so it was not possible to verify whether they included quotas.

Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on analysis of party by-laws.

Compiled by the authors.

Having explored the impact of quotas on the proportion of women on NECs, we return to the effect of selection rules on the ability of women to attain these internal positions. The vast majority of parties (97 percent) have formal rules for choosing the members of their NECs. Using the same selection process categories described above, we find that in the case of NEC members, the types of processes range from inclusive, that is, a group of registered party members or all eligible voters select the NEC members, to exclusive, where a small number of people, usually national party leaders or the party's national congress, make the selection.

In general, the results are the same for women competing for NEC positions whether they are elected through open or closed primaries (20 percent) or in party congresses in which regional and local leaders participate (20 percent). The proportion of women chosen through an exclusive selection process is slightly lower (17 percent), while a combination of inclusive and exclusive processes results in the lowest proportion of women members of NECs (12 percent) (see Table 11).

Table 11: Proportion of women members of NECs by type of selection process (weighted averages)

Type of selection process			No. of parties	% of women on NEC
Inclusive ↑	Primaries	Open elections (all eligible voters can vote)	2	19.0
		Closed elections (only party members can participate)	18	19.5
	Regional body	By agreement/vote in an assembly/congress consisting of delegates representing the party's various territorial branches (regional and local representatives)	44	19.5
	National leadership	By agreement/vote of party's top decision-making body	12	16.7
Designated by party president or secretary general		3	17.3	
↓ Exclusive	Other	Other (combined process)	2	11.9

Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on information provided during interviews. Compiled by the authors.

As is discussed above, gender quotas have a positive or reinforcing effect on the share of women NEC members selected. Nevertheless, quotas are only one of the factors that could influence the gender composition of NECs. Others include party ideology, the party's commitment to gender equality, and the existence of a women's unit in the party. In an analysis of the determinants of the number of women NEC members in Latin American parties using the GEPPAL database, Roza (2010) establishes that there is no statistically significant effect based on the type of selection process used. The author did find, however, that women have a greater chance of winning representation on the decision-making bodies of leftist parties that have adopted quotas and have party rules and procedures that include solid gender equality principles. Similarly, in another study of political parties in developed countries, Caul Kittilson (2006) establishes that leftist parties with quotas for internal decision-making bodies, a centralized structure and ties with groups outside the party have more women among their NEC members.

In conclusion:

- Some selection processes have a positive influence on the inclusion of women on electoral lists for a lower house or unicameral legislature. Mixed processes in particular seem to benefit women more than primary elections. More in-depth study of these processes is necessary in order to understand how they favor the selection of women candidates.

- Quotas play a key positive role in determining the proportion of women candidates. Despite the significant effect that a quota can have on the inclusion of women on candidate lists, however, the political will of a political party and its effective enforcement of the law continue to play primary roles.
- Quotas adopted by national law have a small but significant effect on women's inclusion in party decision-making bodies. This highlights the fact that quotas for decision-making bodies are not as closely monitored by election officials as quotas for candidates for the legislature, and do not include the mechanisms or penalties that are necessary for enforcement.
- The scant effect of voluntary quotas on decision-making bodies underscores the importance of a well-designed quota and the political will of parties to enforce their commitments to gender equality.

## IV. The supply of candidates and the election of women: Far from parity

With the consolidation of democracy in the region comes the challenge of building a truly inclusive democratic system in which equality in political and civic life is no longer just an aspiration and representative institutions reflect the diversity of Latin American societies. Data in this section reveal that there is still much work to be done to guarantee that women can fully exercise their civic rights. Half the population and half the voters in the region are women, but women are still far from achieving equal access to elected bodies and public administration.

An aggregated average of each country in this study reveals that women hold only a small proportion of the parliamentary seats: 19 percent in lower houses/unicameral legislatures and 15 percent in upper houses. Only three countries – Argentina, Costa Rica and Ecuador – exceed 30 percent in a lower house or a unicameral legislature, and Argentina is the only country that exceeds that percentage in both houses (see Table 12). In addition, the data collected on political parties in 16 countries indicate that women constitute only 24 percent of the candidates on party lists. For the lower house or a unicameral legislature, the average is 23 percent, and for the upper house it is 25 percent.

Table 12: Comparison of quotas, women candidates and women elected for a sample of political parties (weighted averages)

Country	Election year	Legal quota in effect (minimum %)		Upper house* (%)		Lower house or unicameral* (%)	
		Upper house	Lower house	Women candidates	Women elected	Women candidates	Women elected
Argentina	2007	30	30	50	40.9	39.7	37.2
Bolivia <sup>36</sup>	2005	25	30	12.3	3.7	19.4	16.9
Brazil	2006	-	30	16.2	17.4	11.8	8.2
Chile	2005	-	-	11.8	10.5	14.4	14.8
Colombia	2006	-	-	17.0	12.3	13.1	9.2
Costa Rica <sup>37</sup>	2006	n.a.	40	n.a.	n.a.	44.7	37.7
Dominican Republic <sup>38</sup>	2006	-	33	n.d.	6.3	n.d.	19.4
Ecuador	2009	n.a.	50	n.a.	n.a.	47.8	32.7
El Salvador	2009	n.a.	-	n.a.	n.a.	26.4	19.0
Guatemala	2007	n.a.	-	n.a.	n.a.	19.3	11.6
Honduras	2005	n.a.	30	n.a.	n.a.	n.d.	24.2
Mexico <sup>39</sup>	2006	30	30	31.4	19.2	30.6	22.3
Nicaragua	2006	n.a.	-	n.a.	n.a.	27.5	18.9
Panama	2009	n.a.	30**	n.a.	n.a.	12.3	7.7
Paraguay	2008	20%**	20**	30.2	16.3	26.2	11.4

CONTINUES →

## GENDER AND POLITICAL PARTIES: FAR FROM PARITY

**Table 12:** Comparison of quotas, women candidates and women elected for a sample of political parties (weighted averages)

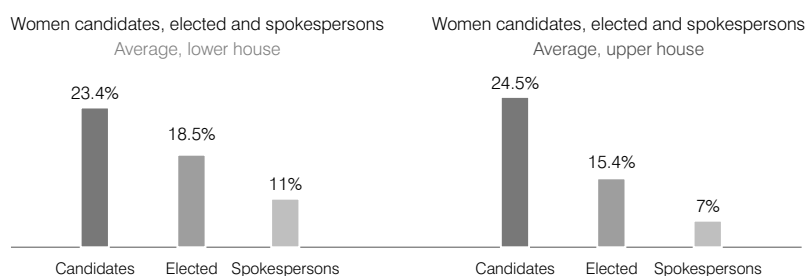
Country	Election year	Legal quota in effect (minimum %)		Upper house* (%)		Lower house or unicameral* (%)	
		Upper house	Lower house	Women candidates	Women elected	Women candidates	Women elected
Peru	2006	n.a.	30	n.a.	n.a.	38.7	29.7
Uruguay <sup>40</sup>	2004	-	-	25.4	8.0	21.3	10.2
Venezuela <sup>41</sup>	2005	n.a.	-	n.a.	n.a.	15.1	17.7
Average				24.5	15.4	23.4	18.5

\* For Bolivia, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama, the calculation of women on lists was based on titular candidates.

\*\* For Panama and Paraguay, quotas apply for parties' primary (internal) elections.

Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on analysis of electoral lists.  
Compiled by the authors.

**Figure 2:** Female candidates, women elected and women party caucus chiefs in upper and lower houses (regional averages)



The number of women selected by political organizations as spokespersons or party caucus chiefs in the legislature is extremely low. Only 11 percent of party caucus chiefs are women in the lower house or unicameral legislatures (in 10 of 88 parties). Women hold only 7 percent of such posts in the upper house (in 3 of 45 parties). Of the legislative commissions headed by the parties in the sample, only 20 percent are led by women. Costa Rica has the highest percentage of women heads of congressional commissions (61 percent) and Colombia has the lowest (5 percent) (see Table 13).

**Table 13:** Women who lead parliamentary commissions, 2009 (weighted average)

Country	No. of parties*	No. of women who lead commissions	Total no. of commissions headed by parties	% of women
Argentina	4	25	62	40.3
Bolivia	5	10	62	16.1
Brazil	8	4	24	16.7
Chile	6	8	47	17.0
Colombia	4	1	20	5.0

CONTINUES →

Table 13: Women who lead parliamentary commissions, 2009 (weighted average)

Country	No. of parties*	No. of women who lead commissions	Total no. of commissions headed by parties	% of women
Dominican Republic	3	3	11	27,3
Ecuador	4	3	18	16,7
El Salvador	5	2	30	6,7
Guatemala	5	15	61	24,6
Honduras	5	11	63	17,5
Mexico	3	2	16	12,5
Nicaragua	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
Panama	5	8	39	20,5
Paraguay	5	3	18	16,7
Peru	4	6	58	10,3
Uruguay	8	6	30	20,0
Venezuela	2	3	15	20,0
Total	80	121	592	20,4

\* Of 94 parties surveyed, information is available for 88, of which 80 headed committees in the national Congress in 2009.  
Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on information gathered by national researchers.  
Compiled by the authors.

Various economic, social and cultural factors combine to explain the slow progress of women in gaining decision-making positions in government. From an institutional standpoint, authors such as Bareiro et al. (2004) emphasize the importance of identifying obstacles that could undermine women's access to such positions at two key moments. The first is the passage from aspirant to candidate, where the focus should be an analysis of the political parties and their structures and rules. The second moment is the passage from candidacy to elected office. Here, it is necessary to examine electoral systems and the will of the voters, and to analyze the impact of measures of positive discrimination on women's electability, given that various countries in the region have adopted quota mechanisms.

## 1. From aspirant to candidate: The composition of candidate lists and political will in need of "external stimuli"

Nominating processes are a crucial stage in the electoral competition because once women have decided to run for office, they must convince their parties to choose them as candidates. Women do not always enjoy equal opportunities in this process, especially when, in the view of many "party selectors", the winning candidate should be a man with a significant record in the party and of leadership in the community (Matland, 2006). Only when party decisions are governed by a sense of equality or supported by mechanisms that promote equality will women have a real chance of winning a place on the party ticket, enabling voters to choose from a pluralistic range of options in which diverse interests are represented without gender discrimination.

### a. The proportion of women on candidate lists

Only one in four of the candidates for the legislature in the parties analyzed was female (see Table 12). This indicates the persistence of a male bias in candidate selection, especially considering that, according to the data in our study, 51 percent of registered party members are women.

Given the number of countries with national quota laws (11 with quotas for the lower house or unicameral legislature and four with quotas for the upper house, see Table 12), it is useful to examine whether these serve as a “stimulus” for parties that show little inclination to include women on their candidate lists. In countries where national legislation does not regulate these mechanisms, it is important to determine what effect voluntary quotas adopted by parties can have on the composition of candidate lists.

#### Women on party lists in countries with quota laws

Although there are differences in the design of the national quota laws, for example, minimum quota percentages range from 20 to 50 percent,<sup>42</sup> a common factor in nine countries is that the quotas for candidates for the legislature must be registered with the election board. In contrast, in Panama and Paraguay, the minimum quota requirement applies to parties’ internal elections, which could reduce the impact on the gender composition of the final list.<sup>43</sup>

The data gathered in this study confirm that the percentage of women on electoral lists is higher in countries that have national quota legislation than in countries with no such laws. In lower houses or unicameral legislatures, there is a statistically significant difference of six percentage points between countries with quotas (25 percent) and those without (19 percent).<sup>44</sup> In the upper house, the difference rises to 12 percentage points, with women accounting for 31 percent of the candidates on lists in countries that have quotas and 19 percent in countries with no quotas. This difference is also statistically significant (see Table 14).

Table 14: Percentage of women on electoral lists, by national quota law for candidates for the legislature\* (weighted average)

Lower house or unicameral		Upper house	
Countries with quota: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Peru	Countries without quota: Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Venezuela	Countries with quota: Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico and Paraguay	Countries without quota: Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay
25.3%	19.4%	30.8%	19.1%

\* Data unavailable for Honduras and the Dominican Republic.  
Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on analysis of electoral lists.  
Compiled by the authors.

In countries without quotas, such as Chile, the absence of women from candidate lists is particularly marked. Women there represent only 12 percent of candidates for the Senate and 11 percent for the Chamber of Deputies. It is a paradox that Chile has had a woman president but is the country in this study in which parties register the smallest number of women candidates for the lower house. In Colombia, which also lacks a quota for legislative elections,<sup>45</sup> only 13 percent of candidates for the Chamber of Representatives (lower house) are women.

In general, the existence of a national quota law requiring parties to include women makes a significant difference in ensuring a more gender-balanced ticket. Nevertheless, there are notable differences even among countries that have introduced such measures of positive discrimination. In the case of candidacies for the lower house or a unicameral legislature, for example, some countries, such as Argentina, Costa Rica, Mexico and Peru, had figures equal to or higher than the quota set by law, but others, such as Brazil, Panama and Bolivia, had levels far below the quota in the elections studied.

To understand these differences, factors in addition to the minimum quota percentage must be considered. These include the existence of clear and strong sanctions from electoral authorities for failure to comply with the law, and of good faith compliance by parties. One example of the effect of a lack of sanctions is Brazil, where Law 9504/97 requires a minimum of 30 percent and a maximum of 70 percent of candidates of each sex in races for the lower house but does not specify sanctions for non-compliance. In such cases, the slots remain open but cannot be filled by male candidates.<sup>46</sup> The fragility in the design of the quota is reflected in the percentage of women candidates registered by the Brazilian parties analyzed in this study. On average, only 12 percent of the candidates were women. This was 4 percent lower than the percentage achieved for the candidate lists for the Senate race, for which no quota was established by law.

In contrast, in countries such as Costa Rica and Ecuador, electoral tribunals do not register lists that fail to comply with the quota law. In Mexico, a public reprimand is issued calling for the correction of lists that do not comply and, if the infraction is repeated, the candidacy is withdrawn. Some laws, such as Argentina's, go even further, not only establishing that lists that do not comply with the quota law will not be approved, but also granting electoral authorities the power to place women candidates on lists in order to comply with the law if the party fails to do so within 48 hours (Marx et al., 2007).

Bolivia, which implemented a 30 percent quota for party lists for deputies in plurinominal districts and a 25 percent quota for Senate races in its 2005 elections,<sup>47</sup> exemplifies the



lack of willingness of political parties to implement such measures. The possibility of registering and electing titular and substitute candidates diluted the effect of the quota law. According to various studies, women were mainly included as candidates for the substitute positions (Sample, 2005; Del Campo and Luengo, 2008). This meant that the quota was implemented only formally, undermining women's chances of election.<sup>48</sup>

#### Female candidates for the legislature: The effect of voluntary quotas

Several parties in countries that did not have a national quota law when this study was carried out had implemented voluntary quotas for candidates for the legislature. In the 1950s, Partido Peronista was the first party to establish quotas for women on candidate lists and for party leadership positions (Tula 2002). In 2009, seven of the parties in the sample had approved voluntary quotas (ranging from 20 to 50 percent) for candidate lists for the lower house or unicameral legislature, but only five had adopted voluntary quotas for the upper house (see Table 15). Only two parties have placement requirements for women on lists, and none has established specific sanctions for failure to comply with the voluntary quota.

Table 15: Political parties with voluntary quotas for candidate lists for the legislature, 2009

Country	Political party	Chamber	Year approved	Minimum quota	Placement requirement	Sanctions for on-compliance
Brazil*	Partido Democrático Trabalhista	Upper	1999	30%	No	No
Chile	Partido por la Democracia	Lower/Upper	2008	40%	No	No
Dominican Republic*	Partido Revolucionario Dominicano	Upper	1995	35%	No	No
El Salvador	Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional	Unicameral	2009	30%	Yes	No
El Salvador	Cambio Democrático	Unicameral	2005	40%	Yes	No
Nicaragua	Partido Liberal Constitucionalista**	Unicameral	1998	30%	No	No
Nicaragua	Frente Sandinista Nacional	Unicameral	2004	33%	Yes	No
Uruguay**	Partido Socialista	Lower/Upper	1991	Members of electoral bodies must reflect the sex breakdown of the body electing them.	No	No
Uruguay**	Vertiente Artiguista	Lower/Upper	2006	33%	No	No

\*Brazil and the Dominican Republic have quotas established by national law for the lower house, but not for the upper house.

\*\*Uruguay approved a quota law for candidates that will take effect in the 2014 elections.

Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on review of party by-laws.

Compiled by the authors.

Voluntary quotas have proved to be an effective mechanism for increasing the percentage of women candidates (see Table 16).<sup>49</sup> Parties with voluntary quotas nominated a higher percentage of women candidates to the lower house or unicameral legislature (29 percent) than those with no such quota (18 percent). This is a statistically significant difference.<sup>50</sup> For the upper house, the two parties with voluntary quotas for which data are available nominated a higher percentage of women candidates (33 percent) than parties without voluntary quotas (21 percent). That difference, however, is not statistically significant.<sup>51</sup>

Table 16: Effect of voluntary gender quotas on the proportion of women candidates\* (weighted average)

Country	Lower house or unicameral		Upper house/senate	
	Number of parties	Female candidates (%)	Number of parties	Female candidates (%)
Voluntary quota (without national quota law)	5	28.7	2	32.6
No voluntary quota (without national quota law)	30	18.2	30	21.2

\*Chile's Partido por la Democracia and Uruguay's Vertiente Artiguista del Frente Amplio implemented voluntary quotas for legislative candidacies in 2008 and 2006, respectively. Because the election data are from the 2005 elections in Chile and the 2004 elections in Uruguay, these two parties have not been included in the calculations.

Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on analysis of electoral lists.

Compiled by the authors.

Chapter III found that voluntary quotas for decision-making bodies within political parties do not have a major impact on the share of women NEC members. In contrast, voluntary quotas for candidates on electoral lists have a more significant effect. There is no clear reason why voluntary quotas should have a greater impact on electoral lists than on party leadership positions. One hypothesis is that parties must draw up many lists for legislative candidacies, creating more opportunities to balance these lists. NECs have a limited number of positions and because this is a zero-sum game, the process becomes more competitive and the party has fewer incentives to balance the make-up of the NEC. Female party members may also give greater priority to promoting women's candidacies for elected office, with the idea that it is more strategic or that there is greater opportunity to bring about change in the legislature than through party leadership. Finally, it could be that parties' organizational cultures have not changed enough for women to feel that there is equal opportunity or that they can participate in the NEC under equal conditions, and they therefore have less of an incentive to demand compliance with the voluntary quota.

After analyzing the effect of entirely voluntary quotas, it is interesting to explore the impact of quotas on the percentage of candidates in parties governed by both a national quota law and quota requirements adopted by the party itself through its party rules and procedures. In principle, these parties should have a greater commitment to gender equality than those that are governed by national quota laws but have not adopted party quotas, especially if the party quota is higher than that required by law. Of the 24 parties<sup>52</sup> in the sample that have reflected the national quota in their by-laws (all parties are required to reflect it in Costa Rica), six have adopted a higher quota than the one required by law (one in Bolivia, one in Costa Rica and four in Mexico). Of those six, only one complied with its own quota (Acción Ciudadana in Costa Rica, which had a 50 percent quota for the 2006 elections; 49 percent of the candidates on its lists were women). Of the five remaining parties, only two complied with the quota established by national law (in Mexico). Two others fell two percentage points short of compliance (in Mexico), and one did not comply at all (in Bolivia). This small sample suggests that parties are complying with only the minimum requirement, and that adopting a quota higher than that established by national law does not necessarily translate into gains for women candidates. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that by including the quota in their by-laws, parties are reinforcing (even if only rhetorically) their commitment to gender equality. Women can later use this to justify and strengthen their demands regarding their parties' voluntary commitments.

#### b. Women's placement on candidate lists

Calculations and expectations regarding the number of candidates who can be elected to public office depend on the number of representatives who can be elected in a jurisdiction and the party's ability to win those seats. The larger the district and the better the party's performance, the more candidates will be elected. Because the possibilities of winning seats in an electoral race are not infinite, however, placement on the list is a factor that must be considered. It is therefore not enough to have an equitable proportion of women on the list. It is also important to know the position in which their names will appear on the list.

This is relevant in countries in which candidate lists are "closed and blocked", where voters cannot change the placement of candidates established by the parties, meaning that candidates are elected strictly in the order predefined by each political party. In such cases, a candidate's placement in one of the top spots on the list is decisive for his or her chance of being elected. Parties tend to have strategic reasons for the design of their lists. They generally aim to maximize their electoral performance, and therefore tend to give the top spots to candidates who, in their judgment, will attract the most votes and create

the greatest voter empathy. Parties may also place leaders with greater weight, influence or negotiating power in party structures in the top slots, regardless of their ability to attract votes (e.g. members of party leadership groups, although this depends on the party's internal democracy).

To examine the placement of women on party lists, we analyzed the distribution of women candidates for the lower house or unicameral legislature in closed and blocked electoral lists in the largest multi-member district. The results from nine countries show that fewer women (31 percent) were placed in the top one-third of the list, compared with the lowest one-third (35 percent). This difference, however, is not statistically significant (see Table 17).<sup>53</sup>

Table 17: Placement of women candidates on closed and blocked lists in the largest multi-member district, lower house or unicameral legislature (weighted average)

	Female candidates (%), largest multi-member district, 9 countries*	Countries with quota and placement mandate**: Argentina, Bolivia and Costa Rica	Countries without quota or placement mandate: El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Venezuela
Top one-third	31	36	30
Second one-third	34	35	33
Last one-third	35	30	37
Total women candidates	308	107	172

\*The districts considered are: Province of Buenos Aires (Argentina), La Paz (Bolivia), San José (Costa Rica), San Salvador (El Salvador), National List (Guatemala), Managua (Nicaragua), Central Department (Paraguay), Montevideo (Uruguay), and Zulia state (Venezuela).

\*\*Paraguay is not included in the analysis of countries with quotas, because the quota applies to party primaries.

Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on analysis of electoral lists.

Compiled by the authors.

As a comparison, in countries where legislation establishes both quotas and placement requirements on lists, such as Costa Rica, Bolivia and Argentina, the percentage of women in the top one-third of the list increases to 36 percent and the proportion of women in the bottom one-third drops to 30 percent. Although this difference is not statistically significant,<sup>54</sup> it should be noted that in 1999, at the request of the National Women's Institute, Costa Rica's Electoral Tribunal supported not only a requirement that political parties implement affirmative action measures, but also a requirement to place women in "electable positions," so they would not be used simply to fill out lists (Jager, 2008). In Argentina, the Women's Quota Law approved in 1991 established that the 30 percent quota for women on lists should be implemented in "proportion with the possibility of being elected". After the failure to comply with this law in the first elections in which it was applied, which caused some women candidates to file formal complaints, the National Electoral Court and the Supreme Court established that the reference point for implementation of the quota should be the "number of seats to be renewed by each

party”. This led to subsequent, more specific requirements for the implementation of quotas in 2000, which included this provision and established a series of more precise rules for candidate placement on lists in questionable cases (Marx et al. 2007).

In countries without quotas, such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Uruguay, where women’s inclusion on lists and their placement depend exclusively on the decisions of political parties, the percentage of women in the lowest slots increases to 37 percent, a statistically significant difference<sup>55</sup> of seven percentage points above the percentage of women in the top one-third of the list (30 percent). These data indicate that without a quota law, parties tend to relegate more women to the lowest places on the list.

### c. Women topping the list

Of all the attractive spots on a candidate list, being number one also has the symbolic effect of recognizing power. Such recognition directly affects electability because if the party has a minimum level of support in the districts in which it is participating in elections, that candidate has every chance of winning a parliamentary seat. As is noted above, the order in which candidates appear on the list is vitally important in systems with closed and blocked lists. Even in some systems with either open or closed and unblocked lists, however, positions such as number one are a factor to be considered. This is the case in Peru, where the order of precedence on the candidate lists presented by parties can be changed because voters can cast a double “preferential vote”, benefiting up to two candidates on the same list. Because Peruvian voters tend to choose candidates who head the lists, this affects candidates’ chances of being elected (Dador and Llanos, 2008). A study by Gallo et al. (2008) shows that in the 2006 elections, women candidates received more preferential votes when placed at the head of the list.

Data from 13 countries with multi-member districts for the lower house or unicameral legislature show that for the parties analyzed, only 14 percent of the lists were headed by women (see Table 18).

Table 18: Electoral lists headed by women, lower house or unicameral legislature\* (weighted average)

Overall average	Average of countries with closed and blocked lists (Argentina, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Uruguay)	Average of countries with open or closed and unblocked lists (Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Peru)
14.0%	12.3%	15.3%

\*This calculation includes countries that, despite having a majority of plurinomial districts, have one or two uninominal districts, such as Nicaragua (1), Paraguay (2) and Peru (1). Excludes Mexico, Bolivia, Venezuela and Panama, which have significant electoral percentages in uninominal districts in which there is a “single candidate” rather than a “head of the list.” Also excludes Honduras and the Dominican Republic, because official data are unavailable.

Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on analysis of electoral lists.  
Compiled by the authors.

The data show that the percentage drops to 12 percent if only parties in countries where the electoral system uses closed and blocked are considered, which as is noted above makes the candidate's position on the list key for their electability. If we consider countries in which the system establishes either open or closed and unblocked lists, the proportion increases to 15 percent. Because the difference is not statistically significant,<sup>56</sup> however, we cannot draw definite conclusions about variations in percentages based on the type of list.

In either type of list, the lack of women in the top slot reflects the skepticism of party leaders, who continue to consider men the natural or most competitive candidates. Nevertheless, cases such as Peru, with closed and unblocked lists and a double preferential vote, show that women candidates can be highly competitive. In two of the parties that won significant representation in the Peruvian Congress in 2006, women in the top spots on the list won 26 and 62 percent of the preferential votes polled by candidates.<sup>57</sup>

In short, the data gathered about the number of women on lists, their position and the shortage of women in the top spot reflect a lack of willingness to include women in the candidate pool. This lack of political will could be due to a male model of politics reproduced by a mostly male leadership. Given this situation, it is clear that in countries that have quotas that are duly regulated and enforced, these measures have been a decisive "stimulus" for the inclusion and placement of women on lists, giving impetus to parties that have been reluctant to work toward gender equality.

## 2. From candidate to elected office: Electoral systems and the effect of quotas

### a. Does the type of electoral system matter? Proportional representation vs. majority representation

Although the type of electoral system alone is not sufficient to guarantee that women win representation, there is consensus that it has some influence on the degree of women's inclusion in elected bodies. For a number of years, various studies around the world have confirmed that more women are elected in systems of proportional representation (PR) than mixed or majority systems (Rule, 1987; Norris, 1985; Paxton, 1997). Proportional systems are used in multi-member districts where more than one seat is in contention. With more positions available, parties have more incentive to balance their offering of candidates, include different social groups and try to attract diverse sectors of voters. In contrast, in majority systems in which only one seat is in contention in each district,

women must face off against men from the same party who are probably perceived as more successful and more beneficial to the organization in its effort to maximize votes.<sup>58</sup>

Another characteristic of PR systems cited as potentially beneficial to women candidates is that having candidate lists facilitates the use of positive discrimination. These can also be used in single-members districts, but implementation is much more complex (Norris, n.d.).

In lower houses and unicameral legislatures, parties compete under systems of proportional representation in 14 of the 18 countries analyzed, although each system has its own particular characteristics. A mixed system is used to elect legislators in four of the countries – Bolivia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela.<sup>59</sup> The data in Table 19 show that more women were nominated and elected to both houses under systems considered mixed than under purely PR systems. The difference between the two averages is not statistically significant,<sup>60</sup> and therefore requires further study. A more detailed analysis of the data shows that the higher percentage registered in mixed systems is mainly due to Mexico, which has more women candidates and women elected than the other countries with mixed systems. As is discussed in greater depth below, these higher levels are due to the introduction of quotas on lists chosen under the system of proportional representation.

Table 19: Women candidates and women elected to the lower house or unicameral legislature, by type of electoral system (weighted average)

Type of system	Lower house or unicameral legislature	
	Women candidates (%)	Women elected (%)
Proportional	23.0	18.0
Mixed	24.6	19.4

Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on analysis of electoral lists. Compiled by the authors.

Because electoral systems differ significantly, even when they belong to the same family, it is important to study the combination of elements that interact in each.<sup>61</sup> One way in which this study has gained greater insight into the effects of the type of system, that is, proportional vs. majority, is by examining countries that use both systems for elections to the lower house. In these, “two electoral systems that use different formulas coexist. Voters vote and contribute to the election of representatives under both systems. One is the plurality/majority system, generally a uninominal district system, and the other is a PR system by lists” (Reynolds et al. 2006: 105). Bolivia and Mexico are the

examples examined in greater depth to determine how the selection and election of women works in countries in which the two systems coexist (see Box 1).

Analyses of Bolivia and Mexico (see box) confirm that majority systems with single-member districts are not particularly conducive to the inclusion of women, either as members of the lower house or on candidate lists. Parties only try to balance male and female candidates in multi-member districts with PR systems. In single-member districts, there is a clear lack of gender parity among candidates. In both countries, the existence of quotas applicable to candidates elected under the PR system is a factor that cannot be ignored. As has become clear through this study, quotas often serve as external stimuli for parties' willingness to include women on their lists. The fact that the implementation of quotas in single-member districts can be more complex should not be an excuse for not introducing effective positive discrimination mechanisms because "there is no impossible electoral system: it is possible to design a quota solution even under systems that are usually considered unfavorable to women" (International IDEA, 2007: 19).

Box 1: Electoral systems: proportional representation vs. majority representation

**Bolivia**

For the 2005 elections,<sup>62</sup> the Bolivian Electoral Code (Law 1984<sup>63</sup>) established that of the 130 deputies in the lower house, 60 were to be elected through nine plurinominal lists under the proportional representation system (D'Hondt formula); the remaining 70 deputies were to be elected in uninominal districts by a simple majority of the valid votes cast, in both cases with their respective substitutes. Law 1779, the Quota Law, also applied. It stated that 30 percent of the candidates on party lists for deputies in plurinominal districts must be women, so that "of every three candidates, at least one is a woman" (also stated in Law 1984, article 112). The quota did not apply to deputies elected in uninominal districts.

With this electoral design, women represented 30 percent of the candidates running in plurinominal districts (on average a percentage similar to that set by the quota). In uninominal districts where no quota applied barely 12 percent of the candidates were women. As a result, in the elected Bolivian Congress, the women selected as titular deputies in uninominal districts won barely 7.1 percent of the seats (five out of 70), while in plurinominal districts, they won 28 percent (17 out of 60).<sup>64</sup> These differences are also reflected in data gathered for this study, based on the electoral lists presented by the four Bolivian parties in our sample: Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), Poder Democrático y Social (Podemos), Unidad Nacional and Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR).

**Mexico**

The Mexican Congress has a Chamber of Deputies with 500 representatives. According to the Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures (Código Federal de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales, Cofipe), 300 federal deputies are elected by a relative majority in the same number of uninominal districts, and 200 are elected by proportional representation (using the natural quotient and higher remainder method) on five lists for plurinominal districts of 40 deputies each.



Regarding quotas, the reforms to Cofipe were introduced in 2002 and put into effect for the 2006 elections.<sup>65</sup> Under these reforms, lists for Senators and Deputies in the two systems could not “include more than 70 per cent of candidates of the same gender.” It was also established that proportional representation lists must consist of segments of three candidates, and “in each of the three first segments of each list, there will be a candidate of the other gender.” This rule did not apply to the relative majority candidates chosen by particular selection mechanisms within parties, such as primary elections (see articles 175 A-B-C). For candidacies in uninominal districts, it was only established that no more than 210 out of 300 candidates could be of the same gender (Reynoso, 2008: 109).

Based on these rules, in the 60th Mexican legislature, only 16.3 per cent of the lower house seats in uninominal districts with relative majority systems (49 out of 300) went to women, while 31 percent of the seats (62 out of 200) were won by women on the proportional representation lists.<sup>66</sup> Once again, based on the lists presented by the parties/alliances in the Mexican sample (Alianza por México, Coalición por el Bien de Todos and Partido Acción Nacional-PAN) for the Chamber of Deputies, the parties analyzed presented, on average, fewer women candidates in relative majority systems (25 percent) than in proportional representation systems (38 percent). Further analysis of the data indicates that none of the political organizations complied with the quota law which established that there could be a maximum of only 210 candidates of the same sex. Such a finding can be explained by the failure to apply this rule to candidates selected through primaries.<sup>67</sup>

## b. Legal quotas and their effect on women’s election to parliament

Throughout this study, we have seen how the existence of quotas in the legislation of the countries studied has made a difference to the behavior of political parties regarding the inclusion of women and their chances of competing in elections. Regarding the direct effect these quotas could have on the election of women to parliamentary seats, the data show that more women were elected to congress in the 11 countries that had quotas for candidacies for lower houses and unicameral legislatures and the four that had them in place for upper houses. In countries with gender quotas for the lower house or unicameral legislatures, 20 percent of the candidates elected from the parties studied were women, compared to 14 percent in countries with no quotas. In the upper houses, the figure is 18 percent for countries with quotas and only 11 percent for those without quotas. In both cases, the difference between the average proportion of women elected in countries with quotas compared to countries without quotas is statistically significant<sup>68</sup> (see Table 20).

Table 20: Percentage of women elected to the legislature based on the parties sampled in countries with and without quotas for candidates for the legislature (weighted average)

Type of system	Lower house or unicameral		Upper house/Senate	
	Number of parties	% women elected	Number of parties	% women elected
Con cuota nacional	54	20,2	18	18,9
Sin cuota nacional	37	14,4	30	11,1

Source: Data registered in GEPPAL, based on analysis of electoral lists.  
Compiled by the authors.

Countries that have quota provisions also show notable differences in the type of rules adopted. These rules have had varied impacts on the election of women, and have not always been successful. To address and identify the important differences, Jones (2010: 288) proposes classifying the quota systems used in Latin America into three categories:

- i) those in which a minimum percentage of women must appear on the list and where there is a placement requirement;
- ii) those in which a minimum percentage of women must appear on the list, but there is no placement requirement because the system uses open lists; and
- iii) those in which, in practice, there is no requirement that a minimum percentage of women appear on the list or ticket, there are no placement requirements and the system uses closed lists and/or the quota system is poorly designed in other ways.

According to Jones, only the first two cases constitute effective, well-designed quota systems. In the third case, the effect of the quota on the number of women elected could, at times, be equivalent to results in countries with no quotas.

Applying this classification to the results of the study for the lower house and unicameral legislatures (see Table 21), we find that in countries where the quota can be considered well designed, the percentage of women party candidates elected tends to be much higher, ranging from 19 percent in the Dominican Republic to 37 percent in Argentina and Costa Rica. Since Jones's classification includes in the category of well-designed quotas both countries with closed and blocked lists and those with closed and unblocked or open lists,<sup>69</sup> it is interesting to note that one of the four conditions that Bareiro and Torres (2009) identify as necessary for quotas to have the expected results is that public opinion is supportive of having women in representative positions.<sup>70</sup> Along with the particular characteristics of each electoral system, this factor could help to explain the different percentage of women elected in Peru (29.7 percent) and the Dominican Republic (19.4 percent). Although Peru (30 percent) has a slightly lower quota than that of the Dominican Republic (33 percent), and in both cases the quotas are applied to closed and unblocked lists, it seems that Peruvian voters over the years have become more likely to vote for women. This hypothesis can be corroborated using the data collected by the Latinobarómetro Corporation in 2009, in a study of Latin American opinion about women in politics. When asked: "Do you agree that men are better politicians than women?", 51 percent of respondents in the Dominican Republic (the highest percentage in the region) said they agreed or strongly agreed, compared to 21 percent in Peru – the second-lowest figure in the region.<sup>71</sup>

Table 21: Women elected to parliament, by country, the existence of quota law for candidates and quota design\* (weighted average)

"Well-designed" quotas		"Poorly designed" quotas		No legal quota	
Country	Women elected (Lower house or unicameral) (%)	Country	Women elected (Lower house or unicameral)	Country	Country Women elected (%)
Argentina	37.2	Brazil	8.2	Chile	14.8
Bolivia*	n.d.	Panama	7.7		
Costa Rica	37.7	Paraguay	11.4	Colombia	9.2
Ecuador	32.7			El Salvador	19.0
Honduras	24.2			Guatemala	11.6
Mexico*	n.d.			Nicaragua	18.9
Peru	29.7			Uruguay	10.2
Dominican Republic	19.4			Venezuela	17.7

\*In the case of Bolivia, analysis of a well-designed quota should refer to the application of plurinominal lists under a system of proportional representation (PR). There is, however, no disaggregated data for women elected under the PR system for the sample of parties analyzed in this study. Such data are also lacking in the case of Mexico. For that reason, both countries are excluded from this analysis.

In the case of Brazil, Panama and Paraguay, countries with "poorly designed" quotas, the percentages are comparable to some countries with no quotas, such as Colombia, Chile, Guatemala and Uruguay (see Table 14). We have included Panama and Paraguay<sup>72</sup> as countries with poorly designed quotas, because in both cases the quotas apply to party primaries, with no guarantee that there will be a minimum percentage of women candidates on the final lists.<sup>73</sup> Bolivia has been excluded because it has a mixed electoral system in which the quota applies in plurinominal districts (PR) but not in uninominal districts (majority representation), for which no data about women elected by system and party are available for the political parties in our sample.<sup>74</sup> Such data are also unavailable for Mexico.

It is interesting to note that in the group of countries without quotas, there are two with relatively high percentages of women elected: El Salvador and Nicaragua. The reason lies in the adoption of quotas in political party rules and procedures and in the level of compliance with these quotas by the parties currently in government in the countries, which also have significant numbers of women in the legislature, increasing the country's average. In El Salvador, the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) has set a 35 percent quota that requires it to place women in positions with the possibility of winning. This has led to the election of 11 women out of 35 parliamentarians in a system with closed and blocked lists.<sup>75</sup> In Nicaragua, the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) has adopted a 30 percent quota for women, requiring that they be placed on the list in such a way as to guarantee that a similar percentage are elected. Twelve women from FSLN were elected out of 38

parliamentarians in a system with closed and blocked lists.<sup>76</sup> Once again, the quota makes the difference.

Using the available data, it is useful to explore an aspect of the quota law that is receiving increasing scrutiny, and which suggests that the efficiency of quotas in getting women elected also depends on the type of list used in the country where the quota is applied. Most studies indicate that quotas work best in electoral systems with closed and blocked lists, which, when combined with appropriate rules for placement on the list (position requirements), set a minimum threshold for women's inclusion.<sup>77</sup> Other authors indicate that women can also be favored in systems with open lists.<sup>78</sup>

The data gathered for this study confirm that closed and blocked lists favor the election of more women because there are statistically significant differences in comparison to open or closed and unblocked lists<sup>79</sup> (see Table 22). In political parties in countries that use a closed and blocked list, the percentage of women elected reaches 37 percent. It must be noted, however, that two countries in our study, Argentina and Costa Rica, have very clear and highly efficient placement requirements that mandate that women be placed in electable positions on the list. In addition to type of list, therefore, the design of the quota would seem to have a significant impact on the outcome. Meanwhile, the proportion of women elected for parties in countries with closed and unblocked lists is 23 percent, while in countries with open lists the figure is barely 15 percent. This difference is not statistically significant,<sup>80</sup> however, which is to be expected, since both respond to a similar rationale – the will of the voters predominates over the pre-established order of the list.

Table 22: Women elected to lower houses or unicameral legislatures in countries with quotas for candidates for the legislature, by type of list (weighted average)

Type of list	Women elected (%)
Open-list (Brazil, Ecuador and Honduras)	15.2
Closed and blocked list* (Argentina and Costa Rica)	37.4
Closed and unblocked list** (Peru and Dominican Republic)	23.4

\*Paraguay is not included because the quota applies to primary elections.

\*\*Panama is not included because the quota applies to primary elections.

Source: GEPPAL database.

Compiled by the authors.

Although several factors can influence the efficiency of quota rules, we do not want to end this discussion without mentioning another key factor – the existence of clear and effective penalties for political organizations that fail to comply with the quota. Examples

include Costa Rica and Ecuador, where electoral tribunals do not register candidate lists that fail to comply with quotas; Argentina, where lists that do not comply with the Quota Law are not registered and election officials have the power to reposition candidates on the list; and legislation recently approved in Bolivia, where Law 026 took effect in June 2010 establishing a permanent electoral regime. Article 107 establishes that failure to comply with the new requirements for parity and alternation established in the Constitution and the law will be punished by the non-registration of the entire candidate list, with the political organization given 72 hours to correct the problem. Only with this type of legal sanction do such provisions move from being legal ornaments that are not applied effectively to truly promoting equal opportunity for women to gain access to elected office.

In conclusion:

- The parties analyzed have few women in the legislature. On average, women hold 19 percent of the seats in a lower house or unicameral legislature and 15 percent in the upper house. There are also very low figures for party leadership/spokespersons in the legislature. Only 11 percent of such positions are held by women in the lower house and 7 percent in the upper house. In addition, only 20 percent of the presidents of parliamentary commissions are women.
- The supply of candidates offered by parties lacks gender balance. On average, only one in four candidates is a woman. Only 14 percent of lists were headed by women, and in countries with no legal quota parties tended to place women in the lowest position on the lists.
- The existence of a quota requirement in the countries analyzed is a decisive factor in the inclusion of more women on candidate lists. In elections for the lower house or a unicameral legislature, 25 percent of the candidates on the lists presented by political parties in countries with quotas were women, compared to 19 percent in countries with no quotas. For the upper house, the figures were 31 percent and 19 percent, respectively.
- In countries without legal quotas, voluntary quotas adopted by parties make a significant difference to candidates for the legislature. Parties with such quotas nominate more women (29 percent) than those without (18 percent). Quotas have a positive effect on the election of more women as long as they are well designed, which implies compatibility with the electoral system and clear penalties for non-compliance. Closed and blocked lists with placement mandates are conducive to the election of more women. In countries where these conditions are met, the number of women elected increases.

## V. Conclusions and recommendations

The election of three women presidents in Latin America in recent years has brought the issues of women's political participation and their access to political decision-making and positions of power to the fore. Despite these significant cases, however, women are still far from attaining parity in Latin America. There is still little openness to promoting women's leadership in political parties, and this is reflected in both internal party structures and political life. This is important because it is political parties and their leaders that draw up candidate lists, devise government programs and make government policy when in power. The choices offered to voters depend on the decisions of parties, which are not always guided by principles of inclusion and equality.

The results of this study show that women's participation in party structures follows a clearly pyramidal pattern: as power increases, the number of women decreases. Women are found in significant numbers at the bottom of the pyramid, where they constitute, on average, more than 50 percent of party membership, but there are few at the top. Furthermore, they do not hold the highest or most influential positions, which limits their ability to promote gender equality.

Many political parties have adopted gender equality rhetoric in their manifestos and programs in recent years, but almost half the organizations studied do not mention gender equality in their bylaws. Parties' rhetorical commitments to women's political participation should be the starting point for broader inclusion, through which such provisions can give women greater legitimacy when it comes to negotiating their demands with other sectors in the party. Although it is important that parties express a commitment to equality in their bylaws, it is even more important that they move from words to deeds, and translate their rhetorical good intentions into concrete policies for promoting women's leadership within their organizations.

From the outset, women face a series of obstacles in their efforts to participate on an equal footing with men in the political process and in its organizations. It is therefore necessary to ensure that women have concrete opportunities to access financial resources and to strengthen their skills and knowledge and access the opportunities that remain inaccessible to them. Training, mentoring and other mechanisms conducive to promoting women's candidacies play a key role in this process, increasing the chances of being elected. At the same time, allocating funds equitably for training men and women party members is crucial to promoting equality within parties.

Some countries have adopted gender quotas for internal party leadership positions in order to balance women's participation in political parties. Such measures have increased the number of women in decision-making positions. The effectiveness of a quota, however, depends on the party's willingness to enforce it.

Political parties act as gatekeepers of the electoral options offered to voters, and women's access to parliamentary positions is still far from parity. Just one in four candidates on the lists for upper and lower houses is a woman. In the bodies analyzed for this study, women hold barely 19 percent of the seats in the lower house or unicameral legislatures and 15 percent in the upper house.

Because parties still believe that men are most likely to win elections, they tend to relegate women to the lower positions on party lists, that is, below the top one-third. There are few cases in which they place women in the top positions on the list, including the first slot. Only 134 of the lists analyzed in this study were headed by women. This is despite empirical evidence from several countries that women candidates enjoy high rates of electoral success, and the fact that voters are willing to vote for women (Ríos and Villar, 2006; Taylor-Robinson, 2006; Setzler, 2005; Dador and Llanos, 2008).

The existence of a quota rule serves as a catalyst for women's effective participation, changing not only the composition of lists for parliamentary seats but also the number of women elected. Unequal performance among countries with quotas, however, indicates that there are factors in the design of the mechanism that merit review. There are countries in which the absence of clear sanctions for non-compliance and parties' lack of willingness to apply quotas have neutralized their possible positive impact. On the other hand, in countries such as Costa Rica and Argentina, where quotas are well regulated, and have minimum percentages, placement requirements and clear sanctions that are enforced, the percentage of women elected exceeds the critical mass and approaches parity – at 37 and 38 percent, respectively.

In many ways, parties reflect the shortcomings in representation in Latin American political systems, not only in terms of exclusion on the grounds of gender, but also with regard to factors such as race, ethnic origin or geographic origin. Despite the lack of information about the political participation of indigenous and Afro-descendant women, we know that, in general, they are limited to a marginal, nearly invisible, role in party power structures and legislatures in our countries (Campbell, 2007; Roza, 2007). Further analysis and research on women's political participation, from an ethnic and racial standpoint, is therefore extremely important in order to document

and understand the nuances of the factors that foster or hinder greater participation by indigenous and Afro-descendant women in formal power structures.

Political parties play a key role in building an inclusive democratic system that allows women to participate on an equal footing with men in the political arena and in their political organizations. In the past year, several countries in the region have made significant strides toward more inclusive democracies. In the new Bolivian Constitution, civic groups and indigenous peoples are recognized by the state as having legal personality. Both Bolivia and Costa Rica have enshrined the principles of gender parity in their legislation. Mexico reformed its electoral code, increasing the quota to no less than 40 percent of either sex with the goal of reaching parity. Uruguay passed a quota law for candidate lists and party leadership bodies, but this will not take effect until the 2014 parliamentary elections. Implementation of these laws will require institutions that are able to monitor and penalize non-compliance, as well as parties that are willing to move toward a more inclusive and representative political system.

Achieving greater participation and representation for women in public life in our countries requires not only political will and decisive action by political parties, but also the implementation of concrete strategies by party members, legislators, representatives of the women's movement and social movements, among others. To promote the inclusion of women in decision-making positions in party and public life in Latin America, we offer the following recommendations and strategies for addressing the low levels of inclusion of women in national and party decision-making spheres.

## 1. Recommendations for countries

As part of their basic functions, electoral bodies and political parties should:

- a. Disaggregate by sex their membership data and data on the composition of their national executive committees. This would allow mapping of women's participation over time and give parties a negotiating tool in their participation in partisan and electoral politics.
- b. Promote discussion and inclusion of quota mechanisms in national legislation in countries that have not yet adopted them applying them to both electoral lists and the make-up of party leadership bodies as a fundamental step toward achieving parity in women's political participation.
- c. Foster discussion and garner support for reforms to electoral codes and/or national laws in countries that have poorly designed quota mechanisms, taking



into account not only percentages, but especially their compatibility with the electoral system in which they are applied, as well as the existence of placement requirements and effective sanctions in cases of non-compliance by political parties. The examples of Argentina and Bolivia's permanent Electoral Regime Law, approved in June 2010, should be taken as a reference. because they not only prevent registration of lists that fail to comply with quotas, but also give election officials the power to enforce compliance, either by repositioning candidates, in the former case, or by giving parties short deadlines for correcting their non-compliance under penalty of non-registration of the entire list, in the latter.

- d. In countries where the quota applies to parties' internal or primary elections, such as Panama, Paraguay and Mexico, introduce specific laws that make the rules for primaries compatible with quota mechanisms, so they represent effective implementation of quotas and do not serve as a way of evading positive discrimination measures, which has been the case in the past. In Argentina and Costa Rica, political organizations by law or because of court decisions have had to adapt their internal norms for selecting candidates to bring their lists into compliance with established quotas.
- e. Introduce additional incentives through national legislation for parties to include more women on electoral lists. For example, in countries where there is public financing for political organizations, parties with candidate lists that have women in more than half the places could receive additional funding for meeting the gender parity target.
- f. Continue discussing the implementation of quota mechanisms without losing sight of the emerging and necessary discussion about parity democracy – the new concept of democracy in Latin America that goes beyond the adoption of temporary measures and has already been embraced by countries such as Ecuador, Bolivia and Costa Rica. This means abandoning the concept of women as a minority and recognizing that, because they constitute half the population, they have the right to equal and balanced participation in representative bodies and public administration.
- g. Adopt provisions in national legislation in countries with public financing for political parties to require that parties allocate part of their public funds to training women and their political promotion. In countries that have regulated the public funding of training activities to promote women's political leadership,

it is necessary to implement monitoring, by both the electoral authorities that oversee parties' actions and women party members, to guarantee that resources are used effectively and appropriately to strengthen women's political participation. In countries that have not yet established public financing, it is necessary to raise awareness among the public and political stakeholders about the benefits of adopting such a measure as the only way of providing equal opportunity in all organizations, so that private money does not become the main factor in the selection of representatives for public office.

- h. Reinforce any other indirect public financing mechanisms included in legislation in various countries, such as granting parties free space in the state-run media during election campaigns. These can be distributed using gender criteria, establishing legal provisions to ensure equitable distribution between men and women candidates, in order to promote equal opportunity within political parties during campaigns.

## 2. Recommendations for political parties

Political parties should:

- a. Reflect national and international gender equality mandates in all party organizational documents, especially party rules, procedures, standing orders or founding documents, as well as in government programs. Beyond reflecting the principles of non-discrimination or quota rules, parties must commit proactively to the principles of gender equality and equity and include indigenous and Afro-descendant women in this goal.
- b. Promote parity participation by women in all party venues through concrete policies. Parties must not only include more women in top decision-making bodies, but also promote equitable representation of women and men in key positions in such bodies and remove obstacles that keep women from attaining senior posts. Recently modified legislation, such as that in Costa Rica, establishes that parties must include in their by-laws mechanisms to ensure that the principles of equality, non-discrimination and parity are respected in all party structures at all levels, and that parties that fail to comply with these principles will not be able to register or renew their registration.
- c. Expand the application and regulation of quotas to address women's underrepresentation in leadership positions in political parties and movements, with parity as the goal. To ensure that quotas are effective, however, they must be

well designed and accompanied by penalties for non-compliance, as well as a party entity to monitor compliance. Given the reluctance of parties to comply with their own norms, however, it might be more effective for electoral authorities to be responsible for monitoring these processes and ensuring compliance with party rules and procedures or legal provisions in this area.

- d. Promote the adoption of voluntary quotas by parties in countries that lack national quota legislation. The quotas must be well designed and include penalties for non-compliance, placement rules, if applicable, and oversight mechanisms. If a national quota law exists, the party should consider reflecting it in its party rules and procedures to demonstrate its commitment to gender equality. Such a commitment could go beyond the minimum established by law by adopting a parity percentage or a placement requirement that ensures that women can be elected.
- e. Include incentives for better and greater participation by women party members within the organization. This includes providing financial resources to promote women's candidacies, as well as opportunities for sharing experiences, training and mentoring (ongoing or at key points in the political cycle). Training provides a concrete opportunity for parties to come into contact with women's specific demands and to strengthen the quality of their participation and their advocacy skills. It is also a way to reach women who are not affiliated with the party. This was confirmed in an earlier International IDEA study of good practices for promoting women's participation in political organizations, which describes the experience of parties whose women's units have increased membership by offering training for women who are not party members as part of a strategy for achieving change favorable to women in party organizations and for increasing their opportunities to run for office (Llanos and Sample, 2008).
- f. Analyze the content of training, which must include national and international gender equality principles and mandates. Only in this way will women be aware of the need to fully exercise their political rights. Training on this issue must also extend to the party's male members and candidates in order to raise their awareness and identify allies to work together to build party structures that are more conducive to women's participation.
- g. Revitalize and redefine the roles played by women's units so that they are conceived from a standpoint of equality and do not reproduce the stereotypes that have relegated women party members to secondary or logistical roles in

party organizations for so long. Llanos and Sample (2008) provide examples of innovative participatory processes initiated by leaders of organizations to define objectives and strategies to turn their units into bodies that transcend the roles of traditional women's units. These units must strengthen their role by defining gender action plans to address women's underrepresentation in the party, integrating concepts of and mechanisms for gender equality into party program documents and government plans, including a gender agenda in election campaigns and training and overseeing compliance with gender quotas and gender-oriented financing.

- h. Implement mechanisms to mainstream gender in government plans, an initiative that could be spearheaded by women's units but which requires support from the National Executive Committee. One practice that could help to ensure that these plans contain proposals that reflect women's needs and interests is to involve citizens, civil society organizations and all interested stakeholders in their development, creating a feedback loop.
- i. Promote opportunities for the exchange of ideas among women party members to empower them and bring about change within the parties. One possibility is to create inter-party alliances among women's units to share experiences and design strategies and platforms that go beyond ideological differences and lead to greater commitment to gender equality within parties. Valuable ideas can come from successful practices in the region, such as those in Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Uruguay.
- j. Promote alliances with civil society, because achieving many of the goals on the women's gender agenda requires the greatest possible number of committed stakeholders. Cooperation between women party members and women in civil society can be crucial to negotiating women rights, because it gives negotiators more weight by expanding their representation beyond the party.
- k. Seek male allies who are sensitive to the issue of promoting gender equality within political parties. The lack of genuine equality between male and female citizens is a shortcoming in democracies that can only be corrected if both men and women work to overcome it.
- l. Seek media strategies to make women and gender issues more visible. It is important for women party members and candidates to take the initiative and

turn their participation and proposals into news events that attract media attention. It is also crucial for women to learn to manage communication tools skillfully in every media format.

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# Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Michelle Bachelet in Chile and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina.
- <sup>2</sup> In 1990, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro was the first woman to be elected president of Nicaragua and the first woman head of state in the region. She was followed by Mireya Moscoso in Panama, who governed from 1999 to 2004.
- <sup>3</sup> The sample consists of the political parties in Latin America that won at least 5 percent of the seats in either the lower house or a unicameral chamber of the legislature in the most recent election as of May 2009, except where fewer than five parties won 5 percent of the seats, in which case the number of parties required was added, in descending order, to reach the target minimum of five. If a party received between 4.5 and 4.9 percent of the seats, the figure was rounded to 5 percent and the party became part of the sample. For more information see the Note on Methodology at appendix 1.
- <sup>4</sup> It should be noted that significant changes have been made to electoral legislation in Uruguay, Mexico, Costa Rica and Bolivia since the elections analyzed in this study. Because the study had a particular time frame, those changes are not included in the analysis, although in relevant cases they are mentioned in either the text or in footnotes.
- <sup>5</sup> See Strategic objective G1, point 191, of the Beijing Platform for Action.
- <sup>6</sup> See the Quito Consensus, points viii and ix.
- <sup>7</sup>  $R(79) = .29$ ,  $p < .01$
- <sup>8</sup> Parties classified themselves on an ideological scale from 1 to 10, with 1 representing the left and 10 the right. The overall ideological score is typically calculated using between 5 and 25 responses provided by legislators and/or party leaders. In our database, however, the score is based on the response of a single person. To ensure the validity of the ideological scores, the responses were compared with the ideological scores in the Parliamentary Elites of Latin America (PELA) database ([http://americo.usal.es/oir/elites/bases\\_de\\_datos.htm](http://americo.usal.es/oir/elites/bases_de_datos.htm)). If the ideological scores differed by more than two points, the response in the PELA database was used. Information from the PELA database was also used for six parties that did not grant interviews. Unfortunately, the PELA database does not include information for 36 parties in our sample.
- <sup>9</sup> In cases such as that of Uruguay, the parties surveyed mentioned having a specialized commission for women's affairs, but it was based in the parliament and not within the party itself.
- <sup>10</sup> Although Peru's 2003 Political Parties Law establishes direct public financing for parties that win representation in Congress, this provision has been implemented only for indirect financing for election campaigns, such as free space in the state-run media.
- <sup>11</sup> The UFRPP found that the reported expenditures met the requirements established for proof of expenditures. It did not, however, perform a physical verification of activities and events aimed at promoting women's political leadership. As recommended by the Federal Electoral Institute (Instituto Federal Electoral), the Rules for Oversight of Political Party Resources should include a requirement that the parties ask the UFRPP for audits to verify that such events have been held. This would also demonstrate that the 2 percent is being used for gender affairs. For further details see [http://genero.ife.org.mx/genero\\_partidos.html](http://genero.ife.org.mx/genero_partidos.html).
- <sup>12</sup> See article 52, section p, of Law 8765.
- <sup>13</sup> If the Women's Unit considers the percentage established by the National Executive Committee for this purpose to be inadequate, it can appeal to the National Political Council for a final decision on the amount, which cannot be less than the amount previously allocated by the NEC.

- <sup>14</sup> The Partido Panameñista's funds are managed by the Finance Committee of the National Women's Secretariat according to a plan submitted to the National Board or the National Political Training Secretariat. The National Women's Secretariat also has a Training and Leadership committee, the responsibilities of which include designing an Annual Political Capacity-building Plan for party members and ensuring that when the party is invited to international training events, at least 30 percent of its delegates are women party members.
- <sup>15</sup> Law 12.034 of 2009. See [http://www.tre-sp.gov.br/legislacao/lei\\_%209096.pdf](http://www.tre-sp.gov.br/legislacao/lei_%209096.pdf).
- <sup>16</sup> In 2008, the parties that answered (21 percent) had an average public budget of USD 6,591,428, ranging from USD 4,150 for the Partido Nacional in Honduras to USD 54,468,078 for Mexico's Partido Acción Nacional (PAN).
- <sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, there are disparities. No party targets women specifically with courses in Uruguay but all parties do so in Bolivia, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Honduras.
- <sup>18</sup> According to the survey, 40 percent paid for that training with funds from the party budget, 16 percent using international cooperation funds and nearly 44 percent with funds from a combination of these two sources.
- <sup>19</sup> In all, 81 parties provided information about the make-up of their NECs (position and name of the person). Not all position titles were provided in some cases.
- <sup>20</sup> Although the terminology varies from country to country and party to party, this was considered the position that follows that of president or secretary-general. These include assistant secretary-general, first assistant secretary-general, secretary-general, vice-president and first vice-president.
- <sup>21</sup> Selection processes tend to be classified by the degree of participation and centralization (Hinojosa, 2005; Norris and Lovenduski, 1995; Gallagher, 1988). The degree of participation refers to who controls the selection process and depends on the number of people participating in it, on a continuum of exclusion and inclusion. The degree of centralization refers to the territorial level at which the party carries out the selection process. In a highly centralized system, the national party structure selects candidates with no participation from local structures. At the other extreme are systems in which the local structures select their candidates. Common practices generally lie between the two extremes (see the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network). Selection processes may be inclusive/centralized, inclusive/decentralized, exclusive/centralized or exclusive/decentralized (Hinojosa, 2005).
- <sup>22</sup> See Baldez (2004).
- <sup>23</sup> For a discussion on appropriate rules for requiring quotas in primaries see Jones (2010).
- <sup>24</sup> If we break down the data to examine the effect that quotas might have on these results, we find that they have an impact especially in the case of parties with quotas and without formal rules, where women represent 47 percent of the candidates for the lower house compared to 24 percent of women candidates chosen by parties with quotas and formal rules. The 47 percent figure, however, represents only one party (Ecuador's Movimiento Popular Democrático), which limits the possibility for analysis. It is also interesting to note that in cases in which there are no quotas, there is a very slight difference between parties with and without formal rules. In the case of parties without quotas and with formal rules, 20 percent of candidates are women. In parties without quotas and with formal rules, 21 percent of candidates are women. This conclusion cannot be drawn, however, without a statistical analysis that takes into account other factors that could influence the number of women candidates.
- <sup>25</sup> As Norris and Lovenduski (1995: 9) state in their discussion of the recruitment process, "... formal rules may have little bearing on informal practices". With this in mind, data about each party's selection process were gathered from two sources: information found in party by-laws and party leaders' responses in interviews. As expected, the responses did not always coincide. When the process described in the party by-laws differed from that described by the interviewees, the interviewees' responses were used. In some cases, the party by-laws did not identify the type of selection process to be used, but offered a range of

options to select candidates from which party leaders could choose. In such cases, the interview responses were used for analysis. In the six cases in which no interview was granted, information from party rules was used.

- <sup>26</sup> Examples of the combined option include Ecuador, where el Partido Sociedad Patriótica (PSP) chooses its provincial candidates in a regional collegial congress but national candidates are selected by the party's top executive body. Similarly, the Partido Aprista Peruano (APRA), Unión por el Perú (UPP), Partido Popular Cristiano (PPC) and Partido Nacionalista del Perú (PNP) choose four-fifths of their candidates in primary elections, and the remaining one-fifth are chosen by the national committee. In other cases, candidates are selected using one method but the final list must be approved by the party's national committee. For example, candidates for Ecuador's Partido Social Cristiano (PSC) are selected by a sub-national congress or assembly but the final list must be ratified by the party's most senior decision-making body.
- <sup>27</sup> Least median of squares (LMS) regression: sample size 69 parties.
- <sup>28</sup> In addition to gender quotas and selection rules for candidates, other factors could influence the calculations of political parties and their decisions about who to place on the ballot. These include the type of electoral system, district size, party size (the number of seats the party can win in a particular electoral district), the existence of formal rules for selection processes, the party's ideology and its commitment to gender issues, and women's participation on the party's NEC. For a more exhaustive statistical analysis that includes these factors, using information from the GEPPAL database, see Roza (2010).
- <sup>29</sup> LMS regression: sample size 39 parties.
- <sup>30</sup> Argentina's Constitution establishes such quotas. At the time this study was carried out, however, no enabling legislation had been enacted for a corresponding law.
- <sup>31</sup> Statistical analysis (using robust least median of squares regression methods) of information from the GEPPAL database found a statistically significant effect for national quotas on party decision-making bodies after controlling for a series of other factors, such as the existence of formal selection rules, selection processes, the existence of a women's unit, party ideology, inclusion of gender equality principles in party rules and the party's age (Roza 2010).
- <sup>32</sup> Since the research was carried out, several countries have adopted significant reforms to their electoral codes, increasing the minimum quotas for decision-making bodies (see Table 12).
- <sup>33</sup> Electoral and Political Organizations Law, 2004, article 104.
- <sup>34</sup> Article 49 of the Electoral Regime Law establishes that: "The Plurinational Electoral Body will ensure that election processes of political organizations' leaders and candidates comply with the principles of equality, representation, publicity and transparency, and majority and proportionality, in accordance with the internal democratic regime of political organizations established in the Law and in procedures established in enabling rules by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal."
- <sup>35</sup> Only three of the 19 parties have a mechanism for monitoring and, in principle, enforcing the quota. There are no sanctions for non-compliance.
- <sup>36</sup> Results for Bolivia are for the 2005 elections, the most recent information available when the study was carried out. In the December 2009 elections, the new provisions on alternation and equal participation between men and women in legislative elections contained in the new Bolivian Constitution and the Transitory Electoral Regime Law were in effect. Women won 47 percent of the seats in the upper house and 25 percent in the lower house.
- <sup>37</sup> In September 2009, after this study was carried out, Costa Rica made significant reforms to its Electoral Code, establishing that political participation must be governed by the principle of parity, which implies, according to the new article 2, that "all delegations, tickets and other bodies with an even number of members must consist of 50 percent women and 50 percent men, and in delegations, tickets or other bodies with an odd number of members, the difference between the total number of men and women cannot exceed one". The code also establishes alternation by sex.



- <sup>38</sup> In 1997, the Dominican Republic adopted a 25 percent minimum quota for women candidates for the upper and lower houses. After Law 12-2000 took effect in 2000, the quota was increased to 33 percent for the lower house but no quota was set for either senators or local level syndicates.
- <sup>39</sup> In Mexico, the Federal Code for Electoral Institutions and Procedures (COFIPE) was reformed in 2008, increasing the quota to “no less than 40 percent of one gender, achieving parity”. Candidate lists must also be designed in segments of five candidates, in which there must be “two candidates of different genders, in alternating positions” (see articles 218 to 220).
- <sup>40</sup> A quota law for the upper and lower houses was issued in Uruguay in 2009, but only for the 2014 national elections and the 2015 municipal elections. Article 2 of the law establishes that “each list of candidates for the Senate, the lower house, Departmental Boards, elected Local Autonomous Boards and Election Boards must include people of both sexes on each slate of titular and substitute candidates, in the entire list or in the first 15 places on the list”. The provision will also apply to lists of candidates for City Councils. The law also establishes a quota mechanism for party leadership bodies.
- <sup>41</sup> In 1997, a reform of the Organic Suffrage and Political Participation Law required parties and groups of electors to ensure that women represent at least 30 percent of the candidates on lists. However, this provision only applied to the 1998 elections. After that election, the National Electoral Council ordered it repealed, arguing that the provision contradicted the principle of equality enshrined in the Venezuelan Constitution. That decision was upheld by the Supreme Court of Justice.
- <sup>42</sup> The range of percentages also varies with regard to the minimum participation of women or a minimum/maximum for each sex on candidate lists. In Ecuador, which had the highest requirement for the percentage of women on lists (50 percent) in 2009 (the year of the election analyzed in this study), the 2008 Constitution established not a quota, but requirements for parity and alternation in pluripersonal elections (article 116).
- <sup>43</sup> On Panama see article 239 of the Electoral Code, and on Paraguay article 32, section Ñ, of the Electoral Code.
- <sup>44</sup>  $T(70)=2.4$ ,  $p=.02$ .
- <sup>45</sup> In Colombia, affirmative action measures have been implemented for the inclusion of women in public decision-making positions. Law 581, which took effect in 2000, establishes that 30 percent of such positions must be held by women.
- <sup>46</sup> The same article that regulates this mechanism allows parties to register a number of candidates equivalent to 150 percent of the elected offices to be filled. Some authors believe that this expansion of the electoral universe helped to cancel out the effect of the quota. For a more detailed analysis of the case of Brazil see Araujo (2008) and Marx et al. (2006).
- <sup>47</sup> Article 112 of the Electoral Code, which was in effect for the 2005 elections, established that candidate lists for deputies from plurinominal districts that did not comply with the quota would not be registered by the National Electoral Court. The Court had to notify parties/alliances within 72 hours that they had to correct the lists. No similar provision existed for Senate candidate lists.
- <sup>48</sup> To eliminate these practices, article 147 of the new Bolivian Constitution, approved in a referendum in January 2009, establishes that “equal participation by men and women is guaranteed in the election of assembly members.” The Transitory Electoral Regime, which was in effect for the 2009 elections to the new Plurinational Legislative Assembly, states in Article 9 that: “lists of candidates for senator, titular and substitute deputy, departmental assembly members, departmental council members, municipal council members and municipal authorities must respect equal opportunity for women and men, so that each male titular candidate is followed by a female titular candidate, a female substitute candidate and a male substitute candidate, or vice versa. In the case of uninominal deputy districts, alternation is reflected in titular and substitute candidates in each jurisdiction.”

- <sup>49</sup> Comparing the effect of voluntary quotas with quota laws governing the percentage of women candidates for the lower house or unicameral legislatures, we find that parties with voluntary quotas choose a higher percentage of women candidates (29 percent) than parties governed by a national quota law (25 percent). The difference, however, is not statistically significant.
- <sup>50</sup>  $T(33)=3$ ;  $p=.01$ .
- <sup>51</sup>  $T(30)=1.4$ ;  $p=.16$ .
- <sup>52</sup> Six political parties in Panama and Paraguay are not included because the quotas apply to internal party primaries. Because we do not have the candidate lists for the parties' internal elections, it is impossible to determine whether they complied with the quota. It should be noted that three of the Paraguayan parties in our sample whose by-laws could be reviewed have a higher quota than the one established by law.
- <sup>53</sup>  $T(82)=1.3$ ;  $p=.19$ .
- <sup>54</sup>  $T(24)=1.4$ ;  $p=.18$ .
- <sup>55</sup>  $T(46)=1.8$ ;  $p=.07$ .
- <sup>56</sup>  $T(58)=1.1$ ;  $p=.27$ .
- <sup>57</sup> Mercedes Cabanillas of the Partido Aprista Peruano and Keiko Fujimori of Alianza por el Futuro. See Gallo et al. (2008: 195).
- <sup>58</sup> See Norris (n.d.) and Matland (2006).
- <sup>59</sup> According to Reynolds et al. (2006: 106), Bolivia and Venezuela have a personalized representation system in which "the preferences expressed by voters are used to elect representatives through two different systems: one of proportional representation by lists, and the other (usually) of plurality in which those on the list compensate for the disproportion of the results of the plurality/majority component." The ACE Electoral Knowledge Network ([http://aceproject.org/regions-en/countries-and-territories/MX/default?set\\_language=en](http://aceproject.org/regions-en/countries-and-territories/MX/default?set_language=en)) describes the Mexican system as "parallel (segmented)". According to the cited authors, both are forms of mixed system. Panama is a special case. Although some authors have defined it as belonging to the proportional family, in this study we use the classification proposed by Sonnleitner (2010: 149), who states that it is "a hybrid electoral system that combines an original form of allocating seats with the election of legislators in very small circuits, which gives it a marked majority bias".
- <sup>60</sup>  $T(30)=.6$ ;  $p=.55$ .
- <sup>61</sup> Del Campo and Luengo (2008) identify the following as elements that, appropriately combined, are conducive to greater political representation for women: the number of representatives to be elected, the type of electoral district, the type of candidacy (personal or list), the type of vote, the electoral formula for seat allocation, the electoral threshold and the existence of quotas.
- <sup>62</sup> For more detail about the reforms in this area introduced by the Bolivian Constitution, which was approved by referendum in 2009, see note 48.
- <sup>63</sup> In 2005, the Bolivian Constitutional Tribunal, through Constitutional Judgment 0066/2005, in response to a suit filed by some deputies against article 88 of the Code, declared the article unconstitutional because the original total set for uninominal deputies (68) and plurinominal deputies (62) did not correspond to the last census carried out in the country. The Code was modified and the indicated numbers were established.
- <sup>64</sup> Data calculated by Coordinadora de la Mujer de Bolivia (the Women's Coordinating Committee of Bolivia).
- <sup>65</sup> The code was reformed again in 2008, increasing the quota to "no less than 40 percent of one gender, achieving parity" and it was established that lists be formed in segments of five candidates each, in which there must be "two candidacies of different genders, alternating" (see articles 218 to 220).
- <sup>66</sup> Estimated data based on calculations by Consorcio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad de México (the Mexican Consortium for Parliamentary Dialogue and Equity) see <http://www.consorcio.org.mx/site>.

- <sup>67</sup> For a more detailed analysis of how Mexican parties have used the selection of uninominal candidates see Baldez (2008).
- <sup>68</sup> Lower house or unicameral legislature:  $t(89)=2.8$ ;  $p=.006$ ; Upper house:  $t(46)=1.2$ ;  $p=.055$ .
- <sup>69</sup> Using the classification in Nohlen (2004), this study defines closed and blocked lists as those in which the order of the candidates is set and the voter can only vote for the entire list. Closed and unblocked lists are those in which the order of the candidates can be changed by the voter by preferential vote or the possibility of relocation within the same list. Open lists are those in which the voter can alter the order of the candidates within the list.
- <sup>70</sup> They also mention the existence of the Rule of Law in each country, active civic life on the part of women and quotas with mechanisms appropriate for the electoral system.
- <sup>71</sup> Data available at: [http://latinobarometro.org/documentos/LATBD\\_LATINOBAROMETRO\\_INFORME\\_2009.pdf](http://latinobarometro.org/documentos/LATBD_LATINOBAROMETRO_INFORME_2009.pdf).
- <sup>72</sup> For more details about the case of Paraguay see Pereira and Gonzales (2008).
- <sup>73</sup> Jones (2010) notes that the use of primaries and quotas is compatible as long as appropriate legal mechanisms are established in electoral and party legislation. The author mentions Argentina and Costa Rica as examples of countries in which, because of legislation and court decisions, parties have had to adapt their internal rules for candidate selection to ensure that the resulting candidate list meets the quota requirements.
- <sup>74</sup> As is indicated above, in plurinominal districts where there is a 30 percent quota with a placement mandate (one of every three candidates must be female), the total percentage of women elected is much higher than in uninominal districts in which no quota is applied (28 percent compared to 7.1 percent).
- <sup>75</sup> Women elected for the FMLN represent 69 percent of all the women elected in all the parties analyzed in El Salvador (11 out of 16).
- <sup>76</sup> Women elected for the FSLN represent 71 percent of all the women elected in all the parties analyzed in Nicaragua (12 out of 17).
- <sup>77</sup> See International IDEA (2007), Jones (2008), Jones (2010), Matland (2006) and Ríos and Villar (2005).
- <sup>78</sup> See Schmidt (2004) and Gallo et al. (2008).
- <sup>79</sup> Comparison between closed and blocked list and open list:  $t(25)=6$ ;  $p=.000$ . Comparison between closed and blocked list and closed and unblocked list:  $t(15)=4$ ;  $p=.001$ .
- <sup>80</sup> Comparison between closed and unblocked list and open list:  $t(24)=2$ ;  $p=.10$ .

## Note on methodology

### Study methodology

In 2007, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), through its Program for the Support of Women's Leadership and Representation (PROLEAD), and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), developed a series of surveys in order to better understand the status of women's representation and participation in political parties as well as the factors that influence women's candidacies and the number of women elected to public office. The variables included in the survey and their relevance were analyzed in a workshop of experts sponsored jointly by the IDB and International IDEA in June 2008. At the same time, two pilot tests were also carried out in two countries in the region.

The IDB and International IDEA contracted experts in each of the 18 countries in Latin America to gather information about national and party contexts. Between 15 January and 15 October 2009, the consultants gathered information and completed three forms designed to systematize the data on three levels:

1. *National context:* Data were gathered about the electoral system, quota laws, public financing laws and the degree of women's participation in national legislatures. This involved a review of national constitutions, national electoral codes and laws, political party reforms, and so on.
2. *Party context:* Objective, verifiable information was gathered about the main venues of party action, including the composition of candidate lists by sex, commitment to gender equality according to party rules and procedures, existence of mechanisms to promote gender equality, and so on. This information was gathered from party by-laws and rules, electoral tickets, electoral tribunals and other sources.
3. *Survey of parties:* A supplementary survey was conducted of leaders (presidents, secretaries general or women's secretaries) representing 94 political parties. The questions were designed to inquire about the mechanisms parties have adopted to promote the participation of women and ethnic groups, the make-up of the National Executive Committee, parties' selection processes for candidates, and so on.

The information gathered, along with the survey distributed to the political parties, is part of the Gender and Political Parties in Latin America (*Género y Partidos Políticos en América Latina*, GEPPAL) database, which is available on the IDB and International IDEA websites.

#### Selection criterion for the sample of political parties

All political parties that won at least 5 percent of the seats in the lower house or unicameral legislature in the most recent national elections (as of May 2009) were included, with the following exception: in countries in which fewer than five parties won 5 percent representation, as many parties as necessary were included, in descending order, to reach the minimum target of five parties.

In cases in which a party won between 4.5 and 4.9 percent representation, the percentage was rounded up to 5 percent and that party was included in the sample.

The following table shows the parties that met the criteria described above. For each party, the table indicates its percentage of representation in the lower house or unicameral legislature in the last election (as of May 2009), the reasons why it was or was not included in the sample, and whether it granted an interview.

Party/movement	%	Why included?	Why not included?	Did not grant interview
<b>Argentina - 2007</b>				
1. Partido Justicialista (PJ)	50.3	Meets criterion		
2. Unión Cívica Radical (UCR)	9.3	Meets criterion		
3. Partido Socialista (PS)	3.9	Meets criterion		
4. Propuesta Republicana – Compromiso para el Cambio	3.5	Meets criterion		
5. Afirmación para una República Igualitaria (ARI)	3.0	ARI was part of the Coalición Cívica and won the largest number of seats (14) within the alliance in the elections.		
<b>Bolivia - 2005</b>				
1. Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS)	47.7	Meets criterion. MAS ran in alliance with the MSM; 72 members of the alliance were elected, 62 of whom belonged to MAS.		
2. Poder Democrático y Social (PODEMOS)	33.1	Meets criterion		
3. Movimiento Sin Miedo (MSM)	7.7	Meets criterion. MSM ran in an alliance with MAS; 72 members of the alliance were elected, 10 of whom belonged to MSM.		
4. Unidad Nacional (UN)	6.2	Meets criterion		
5. Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (MNR)	5.4	Meets criterion		

GENDER AND POLITICAL PARTIES: FAR FROM PARITY

Party/movement	%	Why included?	Why not included?	Did not grant interview
<b>Brazil - 2006</b>				
1. Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (PMDB)	17.3	Meets criterion		
2. Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT)	16.2	Meets criterion		
3. Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (PSDB)	12.9	Meets criterion		
4. Demócratas – Partido da Frente Liberal	12.7	Meets criterion		
5. Partido Progressista (PP)	8.0	Meets criterion		
6. Partido Socialista Brasileiro (PSB)	5.3	Meets criterion		X
7. Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT)	4.7	Meets criterion		
8. Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro (PTB)	4.3	Meets criterion*		
<b>Chile - 2005</b>				
1. Unión Demócrata Independiente	28.0	Meets criterion		X
2. Partido Demócrata Cristiano	18.0	Meets criterion		
3. Partido por la Democracia	17.0	Meets criterion		
4. Partido Renovación Nacional	17.0	Meets criterion		X
5. Partido Socialista de Chile	13.0	Meets criterion		
6. Partido Radical Social Demócrata	6.0	Meets criterion		
<b>Colombia - 2006</b>				
1. Partido Liberal Colombiano	21.7	Meets criterion		
2. Partido Conservador Colombiano	18.1	Meets criterion		
3. Partido Social de Unidad Nacional	17.5	Meets criterion		
4. Partido Cambio Radical	12.0	Meets criterion		
5. Polo Democrático Alternativo	5.4	Meets criterion		
6. Convergencia Ciudadana	4.8		It was decided that the party's weak institutional structure would make gathering data and information difficult.	
<b>Costa Rica - 2006</b>				
1. Liberación Nacional		Meets criterion		
2. Acción Ciudadana		Meets criterion		
3. Movimiento Libertario		Meets criterion		
4. Unidad Social Cristiana		Meets criterion		
5. Partido Union Nacional			The party, which no longer exists, has one deputy who is now independent. The successor party, the Frente Amplio, has only one deputy and is changing from provincial to national, and was therefore not included.	

\*If the percentage of votes received by the Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro is considered, it meets the 5 percent representation criterion.

GENDER AND POLITICAL PARTIES: FAR FROM PARITY

Party/movement	%	Why included?	Why not included?	Did not grant interview
<b>República Dominicana - 2006</b>				
1. Partido de la Liberación Dominicana (PLD)	52.8	Meets criterion		
2. Partido Revolucionario Dominicano	23.5	Meets criterion		
3. Partido Reformista Social Cristiano	22.4	Meets criterion		
4. Fuerza Nacional Progresista	1.1	Meets criterion. This group was part of the Bloque Progresista alliance, headed by the PLD.		
<b>Ecuador - 2009</b>				
1. Movimiento País or Acuerdo País	47.6	Meets criterion		
2. Partido Sociedad Patriótica (PSP)	15.3	Meets criterion		
3. Partido Social Cristiano (PSC)	8.9	Meets criterion		
4. Partido Renovador Institucional Acción Nacional (PRIAN)	5.6	Meets criterion		
5. Movimiento Popular Democrático (MPD)	4.0	Meets criterion		
<b>El Salvador - 2009</b>				
1. Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN)	41.6	Meets criterion		
2. Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (Arena)	38.1	Meets criterion		
3. Partido de Conciliación Nacional (PCN)	13.1	Meets criterion		X
4. Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC)	6.0	Meets criterion		
5. Cambio Democrático	1.2	Meets criterion		
<b>Guatemala - 2007</b>				
1. Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza (UNE)	32.3	Meets criterion		
2. Gran Alianza Nacional (GANAN)	22.2	Meets criterion		
3. Partido Patriota	19.6	Meets criterion		
4. Frente Republicano Guatemalteco (FRG)	8.9	Meets criterion		
5. Partido Unionista	4.4	Meets criterion		
<b>Honduras - 2005</b>				
1. Partido Liberal de Honduras	48.4	Meets criterion		
2. Partido Nacional de Honduras	43.0	Meets criterion		
3. Partido Unificación Democrática	3.9	Meets criterion		
4. Partido Democracia Cristiana	3.1	Meets criterion		
5. Partido Innovación y Unidad-Social Demócrata (PINU-SD)	1.6	Meets criterion		
<b>Mexico - 2006</b>				
1. Partido Acción Nacional (PAN)	41.2	Meets criterion		
2. Partido de la Revolución Democrática	25.2	Meets criterion		
3. Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)	20.8	Meets criterion		
4. Convergencia	3.8	Meets criterion		
5. Partido Verde Ecológico de México	3.2	Meets criterion		

GENDER AND POLITICAL PARTIES: FAR FROM PARITY

Party/movement	%	Why included?	Why not included?	Did not grant interview
<b>Nicaragua - 2006</b>				
1. Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN)	42.2	Meets criterion		
2. Partido Liberal Constitucionalista	27.8	Meets criterion		
3. Alianza Liberal Nicaragüense	24.4	Meets criterion		
4. Movimiento Renovador Sandinista	5.6	Meets criterion		
5. Alternativa por el Cambio	0.5		The party did not win enough votes to obtain seats in Congress.	
<b>Panama - 2009</b>				
1. Partido Revolucionario Democrático	36.6	Meets criterion		
2. Partido Panameñista	31.0	Meets criterion		
3. Partido Cambio Democrático	19.7	Meets criterion		
4. Unión Patriótica	5.6	Meets criterion		
5. Movimiento Liberal Republicano Nacionalista (MOLIRENA)	2.8	Meets criterion		
<b>Paraguay - 2008</b>				
1. Asociación Nacional Republicana (ANR)	37.5	Meets criterion		
2. Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico (PLRA)	33.8	Meets criterion		
3. Unión Nacional de Ciudadanos Éticos (UNACE)	18.8	Meets criterion		
4. Partido Patria Querida (PPQ)	3.8	Meets criterion		
5. Partido Democrático Progresista (PDP)	1.3		The Movimiento Popular Tekojoja (MPT) and the Partido Democrático Progresista (PDP) each have only one deputy in Congress. The PDP was chosen because the MPT split into two factions that claimed to represent the movement. In June 2009, the Electoral Tribunal recognized the MPT as a political party.	
<b>Peru - 2006</b>				
1. Partido Aprista Peruano (APRA)	30.0	Meets criterion		
2. Partido Nacionalista del Perú (PNP)	15.0	Meets criterion		
3. Unión por el Perú	10.0	Meets criterion		
4. Partido Popular Cristiano (PPC)	6.7	Meets criterion		



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Party/movement	%	Why included?	Why not included?	Did not grant interview
<b>Peru - 2006</b>				
5. Solidaridad Nacional	2.5		The party's representatives, who belonged to the caucus of the Unidad Nacional alliance, withdrew from the alliance to form new caucuses with other party groups.	
6. Sí Cumple	2.5		Does not currently have a party structure.	
7. Cambio 90	0.83	Meets criterion. Is part of the Alianza por el Futuro, which won 13.1% of the vote. Cambio 90 was chosen from among the parties in the Alianza, because it has a national structure and because of its degree of institutional organization.		
<b>Uruguay - 2004</b>				
1. Alianza Nacional (Larrañaga) (within the Partido Nacional – Blancos)	20.9	Meets criterion		
2. Movimiento de Participación Popular (Frente Amplio)	20.2	Meets criterion		
3. Partido Socialista del Uruguay (Frente Amplio)	10.9	Meets criterion		
4. Asamblea Uruguay (Frente Amplio)	8.5	Meets criterion		
5. Unidad Nacional (Herrerismo/Lacalle) (within Partido Nacional – Blancos)	7.8	Meets criterion		
6. Correntada Wilsonista (within Partido Nacional – Blancos)	7.8		Candidates from this group who won seats in the legislature left the group and joined other groups in Congress.	
7. Foro Batllista (Partido Colorado)	5.4	Meets criterion		
8. Vertiente Artiguista (Frente Amplio)	4.7	Meets criterion		
9. Lista 15 (Partido Colorado)	4.7	Meets criterion		
<b>Venezuela - 2005</b>				
1. Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (PSUV) (in the 2005 elections, this was called the Movimiento V República)	69.4	Meets criterion		

GENDER AND POLITICAL PARTIES: FAR FROM PARITY

Party/movement	%	Why included?	Why not included?	Did not grant interview
<b>Venezuela - 2005</b>				
2. Movimiento por la Democracia Social	10.7	Cumple c/ criterio		
3. Partido Comunista de Venezuela	4.1	Cumple c/ criterio		
4. Partido Patria Para Todos	6.0	Cumple c/ criterio		X
5. Movimiento Electoral del Pueblo (MEP)	0.6		Parties aligned with Chávez have joined to form a single organization, the PSUV. One party in the PSUV is the MEP. Although it has not dissolved, it only exists "formally," and several of its leaders have joined the PSUV. For these reasons, the MEP was not included in the sample.	
6. Unión Popular Venezolana (UPV)	0.6		Parties aligned with Chávez have joined to form a single organization, the PSUV. One party in the PSUV is the UPV. Although it has not dissolved, it exists only "formally," and several of its leaders have joined the PSUV. For these reasons, the UPV was not included in the sample.	
7. Movimiento Primero Justicia		Does not meet the established criterion. Nevertheless, a decision was made to include a fifth opposition party based on the results of the 2008 regional elections. The Movimiento Primero Justicia was chosen because it has a party structure and a governor-elect.		

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union <http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm> for all countries except: Panama, Adam Carr's Election Archives, <http://psephos.adam-carr.net/countries/p/panama/>; the Dominican Republic, Adam Carr's Election Archives, <http://psephos.adam-carr.net/countries/d/dominicanrepublic/dominicanrepublicmapsindex.shtml>; and Venezuela, the National Assembly.

The election of four women presidents in Latin America in recent years has called attention to the issue of women's political participation and their access to decision-making positions in public life. Despite these advances, however, statistics show that the Latin American region is still far from achieving gender parity. The persistent lack of openness to promoting women's leadership in political parties is reflected in internal party structures and in political life.

Motivated by a shared interest in promoting research and action with regard to equitable political participation, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) have joined forces to create a database on Gender and Political Parties in Latin America (GEPPAL, for its Spanish initials). A network of researchers in 18 countries developed the database and gathered the data using a sample of 94 political parties, which forms the basis of the analysis presented in this report. The goal is to provide comparative information to women and men in parties, as well as to the media and civil society, about the state of participation in political parties and the challenges this poses, in an effort to promote gender equality in partisan politics.

## International IDEA

International IDEA is an intergovernmental organization with 25 member countries. The Institute supports democratic institutions and processes worldwide by providing resources to strengthen capacities, developing policy proposals and supporting democratic reforms. International IDEA's main areas of expertise are electoral processes, political party systems, constitutional processes, gender and democracy.

## Inter-American Development Bank

The Inter-American Development Bank supports the efforts of Latin America and the Caribbean to reduce poverty and inequality. Founded in 1959, the IDB is the largest source of financing for development in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a strong commitment to achieving measurable results, with greater integrity, transparency and accountability. The Bank supports its customers in the design of projects, and provides financial and technical assistance and knowledge services to support development interventions. The Bank focuses on empirical evidence to make decisions and measure the impact of these projects, in order to increase development effectiveness.



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