

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLITICAL PARTY GENDER QUOTAS

Evidence from the German *Länder* 1990–2000

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ABSTRACT

The use of gender quotas to increase women's political representation in legislatures has expanded in recent years. Scholars have identified three main categories of gender quotas, including constitutional, election law and political party quotas. While considerable attention has been devoted to classifying types of quotas, to explaining why they were adopted and to investigating which quota provisions are most effective, little is known about the actual implementation of political party gender quotas. This article is a first step in explaining when parties live up to their promises to promote women's representation and when they fail to do so. Focusing on Germany, I examine four parties' experiences in implementing quotas in 16 states over a decade. I argue that while structural factors such as the electoral and party systems as well as the supply and demand of female candidates are not unimportant, cultural variables best explain whether or not parties actually comply with their own quotas.

KEY WORDS ■ gender quotas ■ party quotas ■ women in German politics ■ women in legislatures ■ women's representation

Introduction

Both the use of gender quotas to increase women's political representation in legislatures around the world and the academic study of this practice have expanded in recent years. Scholars have identified three main categories of gender quotas (Global Database, 2003). First, 14 countries have adopted 'constitutional quotas' in which the country's constitution mandates a particular kind of gender representation. For example, Uganda's requires one female representative from every district of the country. Second, 31

countries now have 'election law quotas' which utilize rules governing elections to ensure some representation for women. Third, and of interest to readers of this journal, 130 parties in 61 countries have adopted 'political party quotas' in which parties set out rules or targets for the gender balance of the individuals they place in office. Party quotas are different from constitutional quotas and election law quotas in that they lack the sanctioning power of the state. Parties simply promise to improve the gender balance of their elected officials, but there are no official punishments for failing to live up to these promises.

While considerable attention has been devoted to documenting the types of quotas which have emerged around the world (e.g. Global Database, 2003; Lovenduski and Norris, 1993), to explaining why they were adopted (e.g. Caul, 2001; Krook, 2004), and to investigating which quota provisions are most effective (e.g. Jones, 2004), a recent symposium on the state of gender quota research argued that the field now needs to turn to the actual implementation of gender quotas (Squires, 2004: 55; see also Dahlerup, 2002). Work has indeed been done on the effectiveness of election law quotas (Htun and Jones, 2002; Jones, 1998), but less systematic attention has been paid to the factors which shape compliance with political party quotas. Such attention seems particularly merited because, comparative research has shown, quotas work best when there are effective sanctions for non-compliance (Dahlerup and Friedenvall, quoted in Dahlerup and Nordlund, 2004: 97). Even legally enforced electoral law quotas have met with mixed success in increasing women's representation in legislatures (Jones, 2004). Since political party quotas lack state enforcement mechanisms, they seem particularly prone to failure. As two observers noted, party rules '*that are followed*, are a huge advantage' to women's representation, but rules that are not adhered to have no effect at all (Matland and Montgomery, 2003: 32, italics in the original; see also Matland, 1998). To date, however, we do not know what factors increase or decrease the likelihood that a given political party will actually implement its quota once adopted. This article is a first step in this direction.

One reason the implementation of political party quotas is understudied is that much research on women's representation focuses on the national level. Because gender quotas are relatively recent phenomena, there have only been a limited number of national elections in which any given party has actually implemented its quota. It is quite difficult to systematically compare different political parties' implementation due to the high degree of variance both in the types of quota rules adopted among party families and in the political contexts in which these rules are to be followed cross-nationally.

Turning to the sub-national level allows one to avoid these problems, however, as branches of the same political party are charged with implementing identical quota rules in subunits of the same political system. As a result, existing research on election law quota implementation has often

focused on provincial or municipal elections (Jones, 1998, 2004; Schmidt and Saunders, 2004). Similarly, in a federal system, studying state-level elections drastically increases the number of observations of a given party's quota implementation, enabling one to explain the causes of the quota's success or failure.

In this vein, this article examines the implementation of political party quotas in German state legislatures during the 1990s. The German *Länder* provide an excellent case in which to investigate the implementation of party gender quotas. In the late 1980s and early 1990s four German political parties adopted gender quotas for the country's federal legislature, the *Bundestag*, and for Germany's 16 state legislatures, called *Landtag*. Although the same parties made the same promises across states, gender quotas had mixed success. While these quotas have on average significantly increased women's representation in German state legislatures, the degree to which quotas were adhered to varied considerably across the 16 *Länder*. Furthermore, Germany's diverse states use a range of electoral systems, have somewhat different party systems, feature varied numbers of potential female candidates, and run the gamut from highly secular city-states to rural, Catholic *Länder*. Thus the German case provides the variance needed to explain the successful (or failed) implementation of these political party quotas. Finally, Germany is rated very highly in the United Nation's Gender-Related Development Index (UNDP, 2003) and citizens there have attitudes among the most compatible with women's representation of any people in the world (Inglehart and Norris, 2003). If party gender quotas are not implemented in such a conducive setting, they seem likely to be even less effective elsewhere.

To investigate the implementation of political party gender quotas, this article proceeds in four steps. First, the quota specified in each party's statute is described. Second, using data from state legislative handbooks – in which parliamentarians are required to publish their photograph and biographical information – the article measures to what degree women's state-level representation has increased in Germany since the adoption of quotas and how representation has varied across states and parties. The third section explains the sources of this variance, arguing that cultural characteristics of political actors, rather than structural aspects of the political system, are primarily responsible for the success or failure of party gender quotas. The conclusion discusses the broader implications of these findings.

Political Party Gender Quotas in Germany

The idea of gender quotas first emerged in Germany in the 1970s when female members of the Social Democrats (SPD) began to voice dissatisfaction with the male domination of their party. Quotas proved contentious, however, and they were not initially adopted. In the early 1980s the Greens

entered the *Bundestag* for the first time and, in keeping with their ideological support for participatory democracy and equality, they introduced quotas for women in their party in 1985. By 1990 the Greens promised to give women 50 percent of all party and electoral offices. To meet their goal, the Greens promised to use the 'zipper system', whereby every other slot on their electoral list was to be filled by a woman.

This development was very well received by many of the SPD's female voters and the party began to fear losing them to the Greens, who were already chipping away at the Social Democrats' electoral base (Kolinsky, 1989: 236–7). As a result, in 1988 the SPD also adopted a gender quota, promising gradually to improve women's electoral representation in the coming decade.¹ Between 1988 and 1990 they promised to allot 25 percent of their ballot positions to women; between 1990 and 1994 one-third of slots; and after 1994 40 percent of electoral places were to go to female candidates. The moving target was designed to allow the party time to develop an increasingly large cadre of qualified female candidates.

After German unification in 1990, the former East German Communist Party renamed itself the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) and, in an effort to refashion itself into a new left style party, adopted the Green's zipper system and 50 percent quota.

The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) was slower to adopt what they ultimately called a women's 'quorum' in their party. Rank and file party members were generally unenthusiastic about quotas, but the party leadership feared losing electoral support among younger women and decided to implement changes from above to appeal to such voters (Kolinsky, 1993: 132; Wiliarty, 2002: 174, 182). In 1985 the CDU leadership recommended that the party send women to parliament in proportion to their numbers within the party, about one quarter (Kolinsky, 1989: 240). Throughout the subsequent decade, quotas were often discussed but never agreed upon (Wiliarty, 2002). At the 1996 party congress, under pressure from CDU Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the CDU's *Bundestag* President Rita Süßmuth (Wiliarty, 2002: 179–80), quorum requirements were finally incorporated into the CDU's statute, calling for the use of a two-to-one ratio when drawing up electoral lists. The statute agreed to, however, also allowed that if nominating committees were unable to comply with this requirement they could include fewer female candidates as long as they 'justified' their actions.

The Christian Democrats' Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union, has not adopted a gender quota of any kind. Similarly, the liberal Free Democratic Party, represented in some German states, also has no statute governing women's representation. The CDU's reluctance to adopt even a limited quota and the other rightist parties' lack of quotas are consistent with the finding from across western Europe that leftist parties are more likely to adopt gender quotas than parties of the right (Caul, 2001).

Other parties represented in some, but not all, of the *Länder* between 1990 and 2000 included the far-right Republicans and the German People's

Union (DVU), the Danish minority party, the SSW, in Schleswig-Holstein, the STATT protest party in Hamburg, and, in Bremen, electoral lists called the BK and the AFB. Because these parties either do not employ quotas or are not represented outside a single state or electoral period, they are excluded from the following analysis.

Inconsistent Implementation of Party Quotas Across the *Länder*

Overall, Germany's political party quotas have been overwhelmingly successful in increasing women's representation. The percentage of women in the *Bundestag* rose from 17.8 percent in the late 1980s (Schindler, 1999) to 32.8 percent in 2002 (Deutscher Bundestag, 2005). There has also been a steady rise in the percentage of women in state legislatures. In West Germany before unification, the average *Landtag* contained 16.6 percent women (Kolinsky, 1991: 71). In 1990, the figure for united Germany was 22 percent; in 1995, women filled 30 percent of state legislative seats; and in 2000 this rose to 31 percent.²

The Greens' and PDS's use of the zipper system helped them consistently approach an equal number of men and women in their state parliamentary delegations (see Figure 1). On average, 43 percent of Green parliamentary party groups were women in 1990. Given that the average Green caucus had approximately 10 members, this 43 percent figure implies that there was only one more man than there were women in the party delegation. This means that the zipper method functioned and the last candidate to get in was a male. In order to take this possibility into consideration, throughout

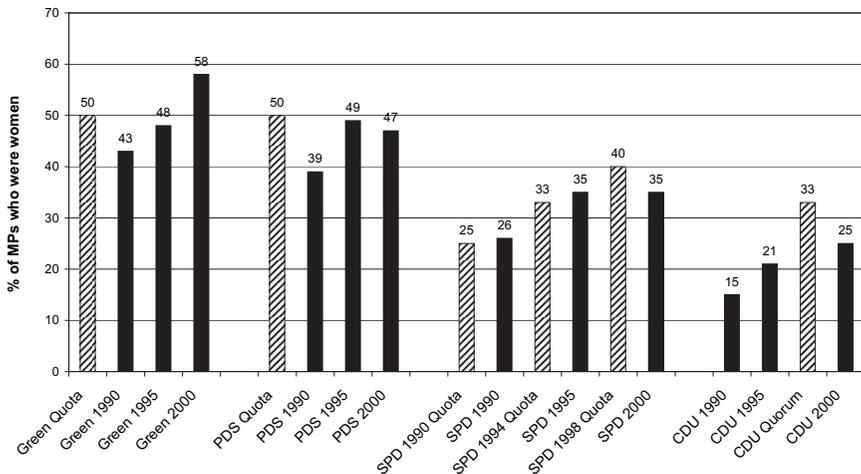


Figure 1. Implementation of party gender quotas: Average across 16 states

the article ‘adherence’ to a quota is defined as being within 5 percent of a party’s goal. Using this definition, the average Green caucus met its quota in 1995 and exceeded it in 2000. On average, the former communist PDS similarly met its 50 percent target in 1995 and 2000, although they too fell short when it was introduced in 1990. The Social Democrats, on average, met their quotas each year; in 1990 and 1995 the percentages of women represented were above agreed upon levels. The percentage of female Christian Democratic MPs in the average party group also increased each year, even though the CDU’s quorum was only introduced after the first two electoral periods. However, on average, the party failed to meet its quorum in 2000.

These averages mask considerable variance, however (see Table 1). No party met, or failed to meet, its quota in every state in which it had representatives. For example, while the PDS filled its quota in all six states in which it was represented in 1995, the party met its quota in only half of these states in 1990. In 2000, the CDU managed to meet its quorum in only 3 of the 16 *Länder*, whereas that year the Greens filled their quota in 9 of the 10 states in which they were represented. Just as parties inconsistently adhered to their quotas, the percentage of women in state legislatures varied across Germany’s states (see Figure 2). Between 1990 and 2000 the average state legislature contained 27.6 percent women. In Baden-Württemberg, this number fell to only 12.8 percent, whereas in Bremen the figure was three times higher: 38.3 percent. Of course, given that different parties have different gender quotas, much of this variance can be attributed to the partisan composition of state legislatures.

However, when the data are disaggregated by party, an additional trend becomes clear. In certain legislatures a ‘virtuous cycle’ appears where *all* parties exceed or approach their gender quotas, whereas in other state parliaments a ‘vicious cycle’ leaves *all* parties far from their goals for women’s representation (see Table 2). In 2000 in Baden-Württemberg, for example, the Christian Democrats, the Social Democrats and the Greens not only all failed to meet their quotas, but these three parliamentary party groups also contained the lowest percentage of female MPs that these three parties had in any state. Between 1990 and 2000 in Baden-Württemberg only one party (the Greens) actually fulfilled its quota and it did so only

Table 1. Frequency with which quotas were met

	1990	1995	2000
CDU	No quorum	No quorum	3 of 16 states
Greens	7 of 13 states	8 of 10 states	9 of 10 states
PDS	3 of 6 states	6 of 6 states	4 of 6 states
SPD	9 of 15 states	13 of 15 states	10 of 16 states

Note: Number of states in which quota was exceeded or filled within 5 percent/number of states in which party was represented.

Source: State legislative handbooks. Data from Rheinland-Pfalz in 1990 and 1995 are missing.

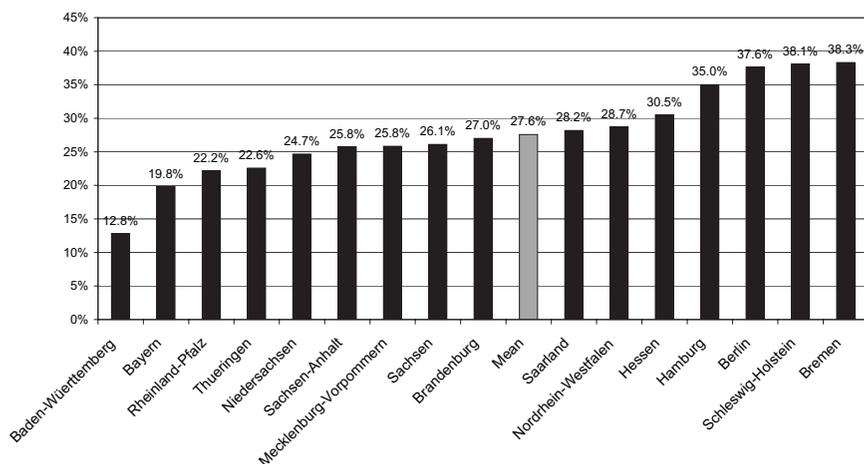


Figure 2. Average % of state legislative seats held by women 1990–2000

once; in all other instances, party quotas failed here. Brandenburg, Niedersachsen and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern also had minimal success with quotas; parties there adhered to gender quotas less than half of the time.

By contrast, in the year 2000 the state of Bremen had higher than average

Table 2. Virtuous and vicious cycles

State	1990	1995	2000	Total (%)
Baden-Württemberg	1/2	0/2	0/3	14
Brandenburg	1/3	2/2	0/3	37.5
Niedersachsen	1/2	1/2	1/3	43
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	0/2	2/2	1/3	43
Bayern	0/2	2/2	1/2	50
Nordrhein Westfalen	1/2	1/2	2/3	57
Sachsen	1/3	2/2	2/3	62.5
Thüringen	1/3	2/2	2/3	62.5
Rheinland-Pfalz	Missing	Missing	2/3	67
Sachsen-Anhalt	2/3	3/3	1/3	67
Saarland	1/1	2/2	1/2	80
Hamburg	2/2	2/2	2/3	86
Schleswig-Holstein	2/2	2/2	2/3	86
Bremen	2/2	2/2	3/3	100
Hessen	2/2	2/2	3/3	100

Notes: Numbers represent the number of parties in a given state adhering to or exceeding their gender quotas in that election divided by the number of parties having a quota in that particular election. Adhering is defined as coming within 5 percent of the quota. Parties include CDU, SPD and Greens (west) or PDS (east).

Source: State legislative handbooks.

representation for women in all parties represented. The Greens and the Social Democrats exceeded their women's quotas and the CDU actually met its quorum – one of only two states in which this occurred. In fact, in every single election during the 1990s, every party with a quota in Bremen met or exceeded it; the same was true in Hessen. Berlin, Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein also saw high levels of adherence to gender quotas.

Explaining Variance in the Success of Party Quotas

Why have all parties represented in some states gone over and above voluntary quota requirements while in other legislatures all or most parties failed to adhere to quotas? In other words, what causes successful or failed implementation of party gender quotas? To answer these questions, it is useful to make a distinction between the structure of a political system and agency within it. Extensive comparative research on women and legislatures has shown that certain political structures, first among them proportional representation (PR) with large district and party magnitudes, are conducive to women's representation. However, other research has found that even within political settings structured to women's advantage, there need to be individuals willing to use the system to promote women. Matland (1998), Reynolds (1999) and Norris (2004) have all found PR electoral systems to be more strongly associated with female representation in developed and/or Protestant countries than elsewhere in the world where popular attitudes are less accepting of women in political roles. The same is likely to be true of political party gender quotas. They too are a structure conducive to women's representation, but one that requires actors motivated to take advantage of the inherent possibilities for women offered – but not required – by voluntary party quotas.

Cross-national evidence regarding the implementation of election law quotas also highlights the importance of agency. In 1999, France passed a 'parity' law requiring that parties have electoral lists containing equal numbers of men and women or be subject to a fine; at the national level, major French parties preferred paying fines to implementing quotas (Sineau, 2002). In Latin America, Htun and Jones found election quota laws to have only limited effects on women's representation because many parties implemented them in a 'minimalist' manner; such quotas succeeded only if *both* quota-friendly political structures *and* 'good-faith compliance by political parties' were present (2002: 32). In Costa Rica, election law quotas only effectively increased the number of women in parliament after the quota law was changed from requiring women to occupy at least 40 percent of the slots on a party's list to 40 percent of the *winnable* slots (Jones, 2004). Argentina's quota law, the *Ley de Cupos*, succeeded but only after women activists from across the political spectrum took parties to court to force them to comply with the law (Htun and Jones, 2002).

Because there are no state sanctions for non-compliance to motivate actors uninterested in filling party gender quotas, this type of quota is even more dependent on quota-friendly agency within the political system for success. The following section reviews the literature on political structures conducive to women's representation, depicts relevant candidate supply and demand factors, discusses the vital importance of agency within these structures, and outlines how these variables can be measured in the German case.

Political Structures

One of the most consistent findings about women's representation in legislative bodies is that the *electoral system* matters considerably (Caul, 1999; Kenworthy and Malami, 1999). Plurality systems make it more difficult for women to be elected as there can only be one winning candidate per district, and while theoretically parties can divide up all their single-member district nominations among men and women, it is very unlikely – although technically possible – that parties will choose to take seats away from popular (usually male) incumbents. In contrast, PR – especially in the industrialized countries – has been found to greatly increase women's chances of election, because it creates a positive sum game in which both male and female candidates from the same party can win seats in a given electoral district (Duverger, 1955; Henig and Henig, 2001: 95; Rule, 1987).

Germany's federal-level electoral system is a mixed one, allotting half of the *Bundestag's* seats through a plurality system and the other half through PR lists. Prior to the adoption of party quotas, women in the *Bundestag* were four times more likely to have been elected via PR than via plurality (Rule, 1987). Most German states have adopted this electoral system as well. There are, however, some variations on the *Länder's* electoral systems which may influence the percentages of women elected in these states.³

The percentage of state legislature seats awarded via PR lists ranges from 100 percent in Hamburg and Bremen to only 20 percent in the Saarland. The greater the percentage of seats awarded via PR, the greater the likelihood that parties will be able to meet their quotas. Prior research on PR has also found that the larger the district magnitude, the more likely the results will be proportional to a given group's percentage in the population (Engstrom, 1987; Henig and Henig, 2001: 95–6; Rule, 1987). In Germany, the number of seats on lists ranges from 121 in Hamburg to only 10 in the Saarland. The longer the list, then, the more favourable the ratio of female candidates is hypothesized to be. Conversely, in countries where plurality electoral systems are used, women have been found to be more successful in districts with smaller populations (Rule, 1990). In Germany, the number of constituents represented by a direct mandate ranges from 142,000 in Nordrhein Westfalen to 26,000 in the Saarland. The smaller the plurality district size, then, the more successful parties should be in meeting their quotas.

Where PR is combined with preferential lists, voters can determine the order of candidates' names on the party list. Findings on gender and preferential lists have been varied. Some scholars have found evidence that this electoral system may work against women because voters choose to bump new female candidates down the list in favour of established 'old boys' (Ellis, 2002; Jones, 1998). However, others have documented incidents of feminist voters using preferential lists to place women at the top of the list (Henig and Henig, 2001: 99; Norris, 1985). Only one German state – Bayern – uses such preferential lists and its experience is similarly mixed. One study investigated the fate of female candidates in Bavarian state elections and found that half of them were moved down the list, one-third were bumped up and the rest were unchanged (Hoecker, 1994: 73). A dummy variable is used in the analysis below to assess the effect of Bayern's preferential list electoral system.

In addition to the electoral system, the party system may also exert an influence on the success of gender quotas. Where *party competition* is high, parties may fight their battles on key issues of the day, ignoring quotas and running male candidates who are perceived to be safer bets. Where one party or coalition is clearly dominant, however, there may be more leeway for parties to pay attention to gender quotas. Opposition parties may try to woo female voters away from the dominant party by stressing their commitment to gender quotas. Such strategic action, often on the part of a smaller party facing a large rival or a party having suffered a large defeat, accounts for the initial adoption of many gender quotas (Caul, 2001; Krook, 2004: 60; Lovenduski and Norris, 1993: 9; Matland and Studlar, 1996). In the following analysis, party competition is measured in the west by taking the average difference in the vote share received by the Christian Democrats and liberals, and the vote share received by the Social Democrats and the Greens, in elections across the 1990s. In the three-party eastern system, the vote share of the smallest of the three parties represented (CDU, PDS, SPD) was subtracted from the vote share of the largest of the three parties.

A *party's degree of centralization and the institutionalization of their nomination process* also influences women's chances of being elected (Caul, 1999; Henig and Henig, 2001: 49–50; Lovenduski and Norris, 1993: 13–14, 327). In highly centralized parties, leaders can, if they choose, easily decide to place more women on the ballot. Additionally, the more institutionalized the nomination process is, the easier it is for outsiders, such as women, to determine what has to be done to be nominated for a slot of the ballot. German laws governing candidate selection are identical across the country. The law requires that candidates for federal and state elections be chosen in a 'democratic' manner by party members – an assembly of members in the electoral district for plurality seats and at the state or regional level for PR lists. Correspondence with the various parties' women's auxiliary groups across the *Länder* suggests that the *de facto* process of candidate selection within each party is relatively constant from state to state. As a result, this

variable does not seem capable of accounting for varying quota adherence across Germany for most of the 1990s and will not be considered in the analysis below.

However, this variable *is* relevant to eastern German *Länder* in 1990. There, state elections were held immediately following unification, while political parties were still being formed. Interviews with state legislators nominated and subsequently elected in this period paint the picture of an extremely chaotic nomination process (Davidson-Schmich, 2005). Party meetings were held on an evening prior to the election, individuals declared their candidacy and the people who gave the most convincing speeches were selected for the ballot. Scant attention was paid to gender (or any other strategic characteristics) when lists were drawn up. Because potential female candidates may have had childcare or other family responsibilities on the evenings the lists were drawn up, or because women's voices may not have been as persuasive given gender stereotypes, this decentralized, uninstitutionalized nomination process was not conducive to women's representation. A dummy east/west variable is used to capture this variation on recruitment in the analysis below.

Even with a highly institutionalized nomination process, however, if there are few women who are available to select as candidates, the party most committed to women's representation will still have difficulty fulfilling its quota. Indeed, this problem finding a *supply of candidates* plagued the Greens in the early years of their women's quota (Kolinsky, 1991; Norris and Lovenduski, 1993: 405). Candidates in Germany are usually drawn from four main areas: internal party offices, local elected offices, related interest groups and the public sector (Kaltefleiter, 1976; Patzelt, 1995; Saalfeld, 1997; von Beyme, 1986). In order to document potential variations in the supply of female candidates across the German *Länder*, each of these recruitment channels is investigated below.

The parties in Germany recognize the importance of developing a cadre of women party officials for reaching their gender quotas. The Greens, the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats have all developed quotas not only for their electoral lists but also for internal party offices. While national party initiatives to promote women in internal offices apply across the *Länder*, they may meet with varied success from state to state. To determine whether this has been the case or not, the percentages of women in top party offices were measured. These offices included the state head and deputy head of the party, its general secretary, treasurer and members of its board of directors. The higher the percentage of women in internal party offices, the more likely there will be potential female candidates for a state party to draw on and, in turn, the more successful gender quotas are expected to be.

Similarly, the higher the number of women serving in local councils, in public administration⁴ and in key interest groups in a given state, the higher the number of qualified candidates there will be for state-level elections and

the more likely quotas are to succeed. To measure the number of women serving in local elected office, the average number of women serving on city/county councils in the two largest cities and two largest counties in a given state was taken. The number of women in public service was calculated as a percentage of state-level employees who were women; these data came from state statistical offices. To gauge the number of women in interest group leadership positions, the gender of the head and deputy head of three major interest groups in each state was determined. These groups included the teacher's union (*Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft*), the police union (*Gewerkschaft der Polizei*) and an environmental group (BUND); each has close ties to one of the major political parties, i.e. the Social Democrats, the Christian Democrats and the Greens/PDS, respectively.

A large supply of candidates would be even more conducive to quota success if there were a high demand for candidates. In settings where there is a high level of legislative turnover, many new opportunities are created for women and other novice candidates (Norris, 2004: 189; Norris and Lovenduski, 1995: 29; Welch and Studlar, 1990: 401). In contrast, where turnover is low, established (usually male) incumbents may leave little room for newcomers. It will be harder for proponents of women's quotas to fulfil quotas by displacing incumbents than it will be for pro-women agents in *Länder* where there are many vacancies in the state legislature. Thus, the percentage of legislative seats that turn over from year to year may help explain quota adherence across the German states. In order to determine the amount of turnover that German state legislatures have seen in the past decade, the tenure of each MP in 2000 was measured and averaged for each *Land*. The shorter the tenure of the average deputy, the more turnover there was in that legislature in the past decade and the more likely it would seem that parties would be able to meet their quotas by introducing new, female candidates.

Agency within Political Structures

While the above electoral and party systems – as well as the supply and demand factors considered – are certainly not unimportant for the success or failure of political party gender quotas, it is also vital to consider agency within this structure. As such quotas are voluntary, if there is no one actively recruiting women or if the people who select among potential candidates are hostile to gender quotas, female candidates may be overlooked or excluded – even in *Länder* with conducive electoral and party systems, a large supply of potential candidates and a demand for new candidates.

Often those most active in promoting women's candidacy are other women. As Lovenduski and Norris observed in their work on women and political parties in western Europe, 'there [was] no party in which efforts to nominate more women have occurred without an intervention by women making claims' (1993: 14). Indeed, the number of women in a given party's

leadership is a strong predictor of whether a given party will adopt gender quotas in the first place (Caul, 2001). Thus, in Germany, one set of important agents who are likely to recruit women and promote gender quotas are women in the state executive. Female Prime Ministers (*Ministerpräsidentin*) and Cabinet Ministers are significant figures within their parties and can play an important role in identifying, mentoring and promoting other women for vacant legislative seats. In order to assess the impact of these important promoters of female candidates on the implementation of gender quotas, the total number of Cabinet positions in a given state over the 1990s was counted, as was the number of women who occupied these seats during the decade. This percentage is used in the analysis below.

Women's organizations outside the executive or legislative branch have also been found to play a role in the establishment of gender quotas (Antić and Gortnar, 2004: 77–8; Jones, 2004; Krook, 2004: 63). In a study of established democracies, Caul (1999) found that the presence of female activists within the rank-and-file of a given party helped ensure women would be promoted. Women's organizations have therefore been hypothesized to play a role in pressing parties to adhere to their gender quotas (Dahlerup and Nordlund, 2004: 97; for an account of such an incident in Germany, see Kolinsky, 1993: 138, 140). One possible explanation for varying quota implementation in Germany, then, may be the presence or absence of active women's groups across the *Länder*. The women's groups most concerned with quota implementation are the women's auxiliary organizations in the large political parties: the Christian Democratic *Frauen Union*, the Social Democratic *Arbeitsgemeinschaft sozialdemokratische Frauen* (AsF) and the Party of Democratic Socialism's LISA. The head of each state branch of these organizations was contacted in order to determine what actions these groups are undertaking to promote female candidates in each *Land*. The responses revealed that there is little state-to-state variance among the types of activities that women's auxiliary organizations undertake to promote female candidates; as a result, this variable is excluded in the analysis below.

While high-ranking women or women's organizations may advocate quota fulfilment, it is also necessary that 'gatekeepers', or those whose job it is ultimately to select among competing candidates, are sympathetic to their demands. This is because gatekeepers have the ultimate responsibility for creating party lists and choosing direct mandate candidates in accordance with their party's statute (Norris, 1997; Norris and Lovenduski, 1995; see also Dahlerup, 2002: 3; Matland and Montgomery, 2003: 21). As mentioned above, in Germany these gatekeepers are assemblies of rank-and-file party members who must ultimately approve single-member district nominees and party lists. Since there is a very strong overall correlation between popular attitudes towards gender equality and women's political representation (Inglehart and Norris, 2003), it is likely that such attitudes will also influence gatekeepers' willingness to press for adherence to party

gender quotas. If there is a broad sense within a state among men *and* women that party quotas are worthwhile and should be adhered to if at all possible, such quotas are likely to succeed. If in other states, in contrast, both female and male gatekeepers have little interest in adhering to quotas, they are likely to fail.

As countries become more economically developed, citizens have been found to become more supportive of women serving in political office (Inglehart and Norris, 2003). Clearly, the level of economic development does not vary much across Germany, but the country does contain large urban centres such as Berlin and Frankfurt, as well as more traditional rural areas such as the Black Forest. Studies of women in German local politics have found fewer women represented in smaller, rural communities than in large cities (Duverger, 1955: 77–8; Hoecker, 1994: 67; Kolinsky, 1989: 223). It therefore seems likely that gatekeepers sympathetic to quota adherence are more likely to be found in Germany's more urbanized states than they are in large, thinly populated *Länder*. Data from Germany's Federal Statistical Office, which measures the percentage of a given state's GDP derived from agriculture, are used to test this hypothesis.

Even among countries with the same level of development, however, support for women's political participation remains varied, with attitudes diverging along religious lines. Numerous studies from western Europe and beyond have found Catholicism to be associated with lower levels of women's legislative representation than Protestantism (Norris, 1997: 217–18; 2004: 207; Paxton, 1997; Rule, 1987; 1994: 20). Prior to the introduction of quotas, more women were represented in northern (Protestant) German state parliaments than in the Catholic, southern legislatures (Kolinsky, 1993: 137). In Germany's strongly Catholic states, then, reaching women's quotas is unlikely to be seen as a priority by either male or female gatekeepers. Their counterparts in heavily Protestant states may be more proactive in working to fill voluntary quotas. To assess Catholicism, the German Bishops' Conference's measure of the percentage of state populations that are Catholic was utilized. In sum, in rural Catholic states with few high-ranking women in state politics, implementing party gender quotas is likely to be given low priority by party gatekeepers – even if state-level political structures may be conducive to this end.

Results

This section first discusses the bivariate relationships between the above-mentioned variables and the success of gender quotas in the German *Länder* in the 1990s and then turns to multivariate analysis. While the bivariate relationships confirm the importance of both structure and agency to the success of voluntary gender quotas, the multivariate analysis underscores the importance of agency.

Bivariate Results

The German political system plays an important part in the ability of parties to fulfil their gender quotas; strong correlations between state electoral systems and the success of quotas were observed (see Table 3). The larger the percentage of seats filled by PR, the more successful the gender quotas were. Similarly, the longer electoral lists were in terms of the number of candidates, the more likely parties were to meet their quotas. Finally, the dummy variable for Bayern produced a negative correlation, suggesting that voters may move women's names down electoral lists in favour of male candidates. This finding is consistent with an earlier study (Hoecker, 1994: 73). In the 14 states which had candidates elected via direct mandates as well as PR lists, large districts indeed proved detrimental to female candidates. The German case also provides evidence that competitive electoral politics hindered the success of gender quotas. The more competitive state party systems were, the less successful quotas were.

As suggested by the broader comparative politics literature, decentralized, uninstitutionalized processes of candidate recruitment made it difficult for eastern German parties to meet their gender quotas in the wake of German unification. There was a negative relationship between eastern Germany's initial decentralized nomination process and quota fulfilment there.

The results in terms of the supply of candidates did not always conform to the expectations raised by the broader literature, however. While male candidates in Germany have traditionally come from four different recruitment channels – inner-party office, local political office, the public service and related interest groups – the same does not seem to be the case for

Table 3. Bivariate correlations

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Correlation with state-level success of quotas</i>
PR electoral system	0.36
Length of party list	0.20
Preferential list (Bayern)	-0.17
Number of citizens per direct mandate	-0.39
Competitiveness of party system	-0.24
Non-institutionalized candidate selection	-0.24
Women in inner-party office	0.20
Women in local political office	0.19
Women in interest groups	0.02
Women in public service	-0.31
Legislative turnover	-0.11
Women in state-level executive office	0.34
Catholic	-0.11
Rural	-0.72

Note: See text for sources.

women. There was a positive correlation between the number of women in key inner-party offices and the success of quotas. The same was true for local political office. The correlation between the number of women in leading interest group positions in a given state and the success of gender quotas in that state was negligible, however. Most surprising, the relationship between the number of women in public service in a given state and the functioning of quotas there was actually negative. It appears, then, that German political parties are drawing on women within their own ranks, either those serving in inner-party office or those who have had local political careers, rather than seeking female candidates elsewhere. These findings are consistent with Welch's (1978) evidence that there are fewer women in state legislatures than the eligibility pool would permit.

The results in terms of turnover were also surprising. There was a negative relationship between legislative turnover and the success of gender quotas. At first glance, this result appears counter-intuitive. As older, usually male, veterans leave state political careers, they could easily be replaced by female candidates, making it feasible for parties to meet their gender quotas. That they did not do this in Germany may stem from some case-specific features. The 1990s brought about a change in the make-up of the national-level governing coalition; when the Red-Green Schroeder government took office in Berlin it was able to provide federal- and European-level positions for loyal Social Democrats and Greens. In an effort to send a signal about the parties' commitment to women, many of those who were tapped for these offices were women holding state-level political office. As a result, the pool of female candidates in strongly Social Democratic or Green *Länder* may have been depleted, causing open seats to be filled by male candidates.

As expected, in addition to these structural aspects of the electoral and party systems, there was a strong bivariate relationship between the success of voluntary gender quotas and certain agents within the German *Länder*. Women in executive positions were positively correlated with the success of party gender quotas in the 1990s. Furthermore, as predicted, the more Catholic a given state, the less successful quotas were. The strongest bivariate relationship of all was the positive correlation (0.72) between agricultural economies and the failure of women's quotas.

Multivariate Analysis

Multivariate analysis – an Ordinary Least Squares regression using the dependent variable described in Table 2 – underscores the importance of these latter variables (see Table 4). In the model used, a state's electoral system was measured using the percentage of seats allotted via PR lists rather than the length of the list or the size of single-member districts; all of the other variables mentioned above were included in the equation.

The only structural variable which proved significant was the dummy variable used to capture Bayern's preferential list system; interestingly,

however, this was significant in a positive direction. This either indicates that preferential lists are being used by feminist voters to privilege female candidates or this variable is capturing some other aspect of Bavarian politics.⁵

The electoral system and the competitiveness of the party system were not significant in multivariate analysis. Similarly, the variable designed to capture the decentralized nature of the candidate recruitment process in eastern Germany following the fall of the Berlin Wall did not prove to be significant. Nor were most of the variables dealing with the supply of female candidates. The percentages of women in local government, interest groups and party offices had no effect on quota implementation. The percentage of women in public service was weakly significant ($t_{.10}$) in a negative direction. Although German male candidates are often recruited from the public service, a strong female presence in state-level public sectors does not help

Table 4. OLS results

	<i>Coefficient (standard error)</i>
Intercept**	2.553 (1.26)
Electoral system	-0.002 (0.003)
Party competition	-0.004 (0.008)
Bayern**	1.166 (0.581)
East	-0.171 (0.170)
Inner-party office	0.673 (1.078)
Local office	-0.017 (0.014)
Interest group	-0.088 (0.104)
Public service*	-0.011 (0.007)
Turnover	-0.015 (0.105)
Women in executive	-0.002 (0.008)
Catholic**	-0.012 (0.006)
Agrarian***	-0.313 (0.098)

Notes: Adjusted R²: 0.557.

*** 95 percent confidence interval.

** 90 percent confidence interval.

* 80 percent confidence interval.

parties fill their quotas. Finally, the degree of turnover in a given legislature did not prove significant in the regression results.

As expected, the success of voluntary gender quotas in the German states hinged not on the political structure of these *Länder*, but rather on the willingness of individuals within the system to act on the opportunities inherent in these structures. Most significant in the multivariate analysis were the variables measuring both Catholicism and agricultural economies. The presence of women in state-level executives did not significantly increase quota adherence, however.

Discussion

This article has shown that, in the German case, political party quotas *did* make a difference, despite their voluntary nature. Women's representation at the federal and state level in Germany doubled over the course of the first decade that quotas were in effect. Furthermore, the findings presented here suggest that just as party ideology shapes the willingness to adopt gender quotas, it also makes a difference in terms of whether parties actually implement their quotas. Left-wing parties, especially new-left parties, set the highest quotas and came much closer to meeting them than did the right-wing Christian Democrats, whose women's quorum was more modest.

However, this article also reveals that voluntary quotas are not always adopted with equal enthusiasm across various branches of the same parties. In some states, all parties met or exceeded their quotas, while in others, all parties failed to meet their party family's quota. Certain structural factors such as PR with large district magnitude, plurality with small electoral districts, institutionalized candidate recruitment processes and large numbers of women in party and other elected offices, were indeed correlated to the success of voluntary women's quotas – just as they increase women's representation in settings without quotas. In the final analysis, however, political structures conducive to women's representation were no guarantee that quotas would be implemented. Instead, the attributes of the gatekeepers who select among promising candidates were the key factor in determining whether or not voluntary gender quotas actually succeeded. Catholicism and a more agricultural economy created an environment inhospitable to gender quotas in some German states. These findings are consistent with an established literature that finds PR electoral systems are used to increase women's representation more in developed Protestant countries than they are in less economically developed Catholic areas. This evidence is particularly striking considering the case under examination here; compared to other countries in the world, rural Catholic states in Germany are fairly industrialized and secular. If these variables inhibited the successful implementation of party gender quotas in the *Länder* examined here, they are likely to further reduce the effectiveness of party gender

quotas in other settings. Future research on the implementation of party gender quotas at the national and sub-national level in countries across the globe can confirm whether this is indeed the case.

A final avenue for future research involves the mechanisms through which Catholicism inhibits, and urbanism promotes, gender quota implementation. In rural or Catholic areas, do women internalize taboos against female participation in politics, never considering a run for office? Or do parties in such states have an infrastructure which hinders women's political participation through more mundane means, such as holding meetings during children's bedtimes? Or do women attempt to run, only to be thwarted by biases on the part of gatekeepers? Or are other mechanisms at work? Answering these questions will help advocates of party gender quotas improve their implementation in such areas.

Notes

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- 1 This pattern of the Green party serving as a quota 'contiguation' was replicated elsewhere in Western Europe during this period (Matland and Studlar, 1996).
- 2 In Germany's federal system, state-level elections are held at varying intervals across states due to different terms of office and occasional government collapses. Thus, there is no one year that is 'election year' in all states. In the following section, when I refer to the '1990', '1995' and '2000' elections I am referring to elections for the legislative periods that encompass each of these years. For example, in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern the '1995' election was actually held in 1994 for a term running 1994–8; and the '2000' election was held in 1998. All data come from the aforementioned legislative handbooks.
- 3 All electoral system data were gathered from the states' Electoral Offices (*Landeswahlämter*).
- 4 German law stipulates that all public-sector employees are allowed to take time off from their job to serve in elected office. Moreover, should they be voted out of office at some point in the future, they are guaranteed the right to return to their old job (or to an equivalent position).
- 5 Just as Texas is in the US, Bayern is widely considered an outlier among the German states in terms of its character.

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