

Gender Quotas for Political Positions

Description of intervention

This intervention is to campaign for a policy that requires gender quotas for political positions.

Key questions and considerations

Why gender quotas?

Women are underrepresented in political institutions, and it's possible that this difference affects society through the kinds of political decisions made. A J-PAL review of eleven randomized evaluations found that quotas influenced women's political participation and policy outcomes, and increased the provision of public goods in line with the preferences of female voters. They found that quotas also improved men's perception of women as leaders, increased girls' aspirations, and helped women get elected even after quotas were removed [1].

The J-PAL review was the main reason for considering this intervention, but a deeper look at the evidence suggests a more mixed picture. I came across a couple of papers that did not find an effect of gender on public spending [2].

Political interventions

I have a quite negative view of this intervention because it involves interfering in the political processes of another country. It may be better for a more experienced group working in development, or perhaps if it was extremely cost-effective, but that doesn't seem to be the case.

Provisional conclusion

Further research into this intervention suggests a much more mixed picture than the initial J-PAL review of the evidence (which was largely focused on India). The mixed evidence, combined with the political nature of this intervention, makes me less optimistic about it.

Informed consideration score: **3/10**

References

1. Improving women's representation in politics through gender quotas [Internet]. [cited 2020 Feb 13]. Available from: <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/policy-insight/improving-womens-representation-politics-through-gender-quotas>
2. Rigon M, Tanzi G. Does Gender Matter for Public Spending? Empirical Evidence from Italian Municipalities [Internet]. 2012 [cited 2020 Feb 13]. Available from: <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2057858>