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Increasing Women's Political Participation

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WORLD HOUSE STUDENT FELLOWS POLICY PROJECT: INCREASING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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Introduction:

Throughout world history, women have been underrepresented in politics. Even today, only nine women are heads of state and make up just over one-fifth of national parliaments. As a result of low representation, women have less access to the political process. This phenomenon enables continuing social, political, and economic inequality based on gender. Therefore, investigating laws and approaches that help women acquire political positions may offer new opportunities for political participation. Using case studies and specific laws in countries such as Sénégal, France, Argentina, and Rwanda, this project will explore how democratic countries can increase women's political participation and what other countries around the world could learn from these laws. Drawing from our analysis of these cases, we will recommend policy prescriptions that could amplify women's voices in the political sphere.

The global issue that we are addressing is the need for more women elected to public office in democratic countries around the world. Women have a limited voice in the issues that impact their everyday lives and face additional discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, and race. Today, women are still paid less than men for the same work and struggle to obtain access to education. Their bodies are strictly legislated, as evident in the recently passed a law that bans burkinis on French beaches, veils in schools, and niqabs in public places. However, increasing women's representation is not only a women's issue—it is a global one. Columbia Professor Katherine Phillip has shown that countries that elect women to key national leadership positions have improved economic performance, boasting a 6.8% increase in GDP as compared to their male-led counterparts. Studies have also revealed that in the U.S., both Republican and Democratic women legislators introduce more bills relating to civil rights and liberties, education, health, and labor than their fellow male representatives.

As women's underrepresentation has persisted, many societies have accepted it as the norm. While some societies' outright rejection of women's participation remains highly problematic, this passive state of acceptance remains nearly as harmful to women's rights. For instance, although no explicit legal barriers limit women's participation in American politics, the U.S. is ranked 98th in the world for percentage of women in the national legislature. Less than 25% of statewide and state legislative offices are held by women. Magnifying the issue even further, the state of Pennsylvania has never had a woman senator or governor, and Philadelphia has never had a woman mayor. This imbalance of political power is alarming.

Our research should prove useful for organizations such as UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, which is an important organization for addressing women's rights in politics. Through its intergovernmental bodies, namely the Commission on the Status of Women, UN Women promotes the formulation of gender equitable policies on a global scale. One of its main initiatives, advancing women's leadership and political participation, perfectly aligns with our research goals. Furthermore, the organization is committed to helping UN member states implement policy by providing the necessary support and engaging with civil society across the globe. Ultimately, UN Women's broad reach and shared mission will make it an excellent partner in our efforts to increase female political participation and leadership through actionable policy.

Through the case study analysis of four countries -- France, Rwanda, Argentina, and Sénégal, we have identified successes and failures of existing policies, and have offered insight regarding future policy implementation. We have framed our four in-depth case studies to include three important features: they span across various regions -- Europe, Africa and Latin America, focus on democratic countries, and detail developmental stages of the laws aiming to bring women into the political process. We have examine both specific governmental policies addressing gender equality in politics as well as overarching structural factors that either enable or deny the effective participation of women in politics. Given the spectrum of our case studies, we have made comprehensive recommendations that are widely applicable. Our literature review will not be reiterating why it is a good thing to have women in politics as we have addressed this during the introduction and will restate it again in our discussion of the research question. This literature review therefore takes it as a given premise that we want more women to be in political positions.

Survey of Case Study Literature: France

Our intended research on women's political participation in France serves as a study of best practices in equal gender representation in government. Although Western societies appear to have a legacy of support for women's equal rights, France's progress in political representation for women is recent. French women obtained formal citizenship, suffrage and the right to run for office in 1944, but the proportion of women in Parliament never exceeded 6% from 1944 to 1994 (Bereni 2007). The main debate in the literature is about the effectiveness of quotas v. parity laws. Although parity laws eventually proved to be the method of choice in France's context, valuable lessons can be learned from the discourse.

Many perspectives on the effectiveness of quotas and their precise parameters for application have emerged over time. In the late 1970s, when increasing women's representation first became a point of discussion in French politics, feminist right wing activists, such as the Gaullist women's organization *Femme Avenir*, supported quotas in party organization and candidacies. However, right wing elites rejected quotas and regarded the feminist activists as radical (Bereni

2007). Although two additional attempts were made to implement quotas to all parties, which will be discussed further in the case studies, ultimately, public perception of quotas and traditional views of gender roles by voting members of government won out and quotas failed. At this time, the country was not ready for true equality. Further work by adamant feminist groups eventually turned the tide, as we will see in the case study section of this paper.

Division within the French feminist movement also raises questions about the effectiveness and adaptability of a quota to the French political system, and as a tool to incentivize equal political representation for women at large. While a small minority of female politicians supported it, most female politicians, regardless of party, dismissed quotas as a “humiliating measure” that undermined their capacity to reach their goals independently. On the other hand, the majority of second-wave feminists found the measure to be not radical enough (Bereni 2007).

The literature further reveals that this division comes from a common understanding that a quota is a temporary strategy, rather than a permanent change to the political system. Yvette Roudy described quotas as a “provisional waiver of ‘republican’ principles”, that contradicted the French values of being elected not because of your gender, but because the people chose you for your qualifications. Roudy ascribed to the universalist perspective of Simone de Beauvoir, and believed that the goal of feminism was to free women from their specific gender roles, resulting in women being fully integrated in the common mold of abstract citizenship. In this perspective, the goal of feminism would be gender equality. A quota system that then provides an easier route for women to be in political positions is nothing to be proud of. Roudy, although supporting temporary quotas within the PS, did not want quotas to be a long-term solution. Gender-neutral republican universalism thus functionally operated as a barrier to women’s right to political inclusion. Parity laws proved much more successful and resonated more deeply with the public and feminist movements however, because they were perceived as a departure from the rejected quota system (Bereni 2007).

In France, parity is actually regarded as a ‘homegrown concept’; it was first branded as a new democratic principle by French philosopher Elisabeth G. Sledziewski in her introductory report in a seminar on Gender Parity in Democracy held in Strasbourg in November 1989 by the Equality Committee of the Council of Europe. She rejected the dominant gender-blind perception of equality, which regards preferential treatment of women as a temporary exception to grounding republican principles, and instead proposed that gender equality should be a political prerequisite, just as separation of powers and universal suffrage are. In 1992, feminist activists Françoise Gaspard, Claude Servan-Schreiber, and Anne Le Gall followed up Sledziewski ideas with the publication of their book *Au pouvoir, citoyennes! Liberté, égalité, parité*, introducing the concept of parity to the French public and explaining its practical meaning. They called for a 50-50 presence of men and women in all representative assemblies. In November of that year, the European Commission held a conference on Women in Political

Power in Athens, which created a declaration signed by twenty prominent female politicians stating that ‘democracy imposes parity in the representation and in the administration of the nations’. Although there was some disagreement among French feminist scholars, parity was overwhelmingly supported (Bereni, 2007).

The impact of a quota system can vary by context. France is a Western-style democracy, whereas other countries that do not fit this description have encountered different effects, successes and failures. For example, the quota system’s impact in Rwanda versus in France may owe to differences in application context, as well as the supplementary legislation to reinforce women’s involvement in society. Rwanda is a country with a unique history, whose efforts to increase women’s political participation was largely influenced by a catastrophic episode, otherwise known as the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. We will further explore this in the following survey of case study literature.

Survey of Case Study Literature: Rwanda

The majority of existing literature is suggestive of the fact that the introduction of a quota system has served as a uniform solution to the problem of insufficient female participation in politics worldwide (Crook 2006). Nevertheless, in recent times scholars such as Mona Lena Crook have made the argument that processes of transformation vary enormously across countries and across political parties (Ibid). She cites the Rwandan context as a particularly effective example. After the 1994 genocide, the Rwandan Patriotic Front came to power after many years of exile in Uganda (Ibid). Inspired by their experiences in Uganda where seats had been reserved for women in parliament since 1989, the RPF fought to increase women’s representation in Rwanda (Ibid). Moreover, given their contacts with South Africa’s African National Congress, where a 30% party quota for women was adopted in 1994, they integrated a 30% quota for women in the new constitution that came into effect in May 2003 (Ibid). However, Crook points to the innovative approach adopted by the Rwandan government to promote women’s participation in all levels of governance by 2001 as evidence that implementation techniques may vary across countries (Ibid). The first innovation was a triple-balloting system at the district level, where voters cast three ballots—a general ballot, a women’s ballot, and a youth ballot (Ibid). The second innovation was a parallel system of women’s councils and women-only elections to guarantee a venue for representing women’s concerns (Powley 2013).

There are two main perspectives on women in parliaments which are referred to as “static” and “dynamic” (Wangnerud 2009). The static perspective suggests that when women enter the parliamentary arena, they take over certain areas from men, but nothing becomes fundamentally different as a result (Ibid). The dynamic interpretation sees the emergence of genuine change. Lena Wangnerud adopts a more dynamic perspective in relation to the Rwandan women’s movement (Ibid). She, together with Jennie E. Burnet make the point that in the long-run, female politicians contribute to strengthening the position of women's interests. They argue that

although the female-friendly policies of the 2003 Rwandan Constitution may not prove to be a benefit to women in the short term, the prospects for meaningful input by women in the long term remain good (Burnet 2011). As Begoña Aretxaga argues, “political processes ... are engendered’ even in contexts where women are excluded from the *real* politics (Aretxaga 1997). She explains that female engagement with political processes, whether formal (as in the case of Rwanda) or informal (as in the case of Northern Ireland in the 1970s), transforms not only the political processes but also the constitution of women's identities, subjectivities, and agencies (Ibid). Thus, the long-term potential benefit of greater female participation in governance in Rwanda is the transformation of women's political subjectivity and Rwandan culture (Ibid).

However, Burnet also argues that the increased political participation of women in Rwanda represents a paradox in the short term (Burnet 2011). That is, contrary to popular beliefs, she suggests that as their participation has increased, women’s ability to influence policy making has decreased (Ibid). This viewpoint supports the notion put forward by Claire Devlin, Robert Elgie as well as other scholars that “...increased women’s representation has had little effect on policy outputs” despite the fact that “...in terms of policy agenda, women’s issues are now raised more easily and more often than before, and there has been a strong advocacy of ‘international feminism’ by many deputies” (Devlin and Elgie 2008).

Burnet’s pessimism with regards to the effectiveness of the Rwandan women’s movement adds a unique perspective to the existing literature which largely portrays the Rwandan context in a positive light. She explains that many women's civil society organizations were faced with a vacuum in leadership because so many women left their positions to take positions in government (Burnet 2011). Moreover, the women who stepped in to take their places were either not as well equipped to advocate on contentious women's issues (such as land rights) or were more interested in personal gains, particularly those who stepped into well-paid staff positions (Ibid). Furthermore, many of these women were RPF cadres so they were more interested in implementing policy than influencing it (Ibid).

Burnet also makes the argument that influential players in the international community have a false perception of the overall Rwandan human rights context as they are clouded by the country’s perceived success in advocating for women’s rights (Ibid). That is, they use it as an excuse or means to overlook other human rights violations. The RPF’s pro-women policies gain a great deal of support for the RPF regime from key decision makers and influential personalities, such as President Sirleaf, in the international community (Ibid).

However, Burnet makes the point that influential international delegates to the numerous conferences in Kigali rarely know the details of recent Rwandan political history, and thus they develop a one-sided view of the RPF as courageous defenders of the Rwandan people who stopped the genocide, promoted female equality, and embarked on a path to democracy. As a result, many delegates leave Kigali as strong believers in and defenders of President Kagame and the RPF regime (Ibid).

She argues that Beyond these ‘influential passers-by’, the RPF's pro-woman policies, as well as its efforts to ‘modernize’ and ‘rationalize’ Rwandan society and the economy, give members of the diplomatic corps in Kigali liberty to overlook the regime's authoritarianism and human rights abuses. When human rights observers present evidence of serious human rights violations, such as extrajudicial executions or ‘disappearances’, diplomats often respond with an attitude of ‘at least, it's not genocide’, and then enumerate RPF successes, such as promoting women's rights.

Furthermore, contrary to popular literature, Burnet argues that the women's movement in Rwanda predates the 1994 genocide. Typical discourse suggests that after the genocide, women became more heavily involved in politics because the skewed demographics mandated that Rwandan women stepped up as leaders in various realms (especially Politics), so as to help rebuild the country. However, Burnet points to the fact that the government of the First Republic supported social centres (*foyers sociaux*) for women in each prefecture. These centres focused on the needs of rural women, such as literacy and health education, but they also provided opportunities for leadership to the educated women who staffed them. (Baldwin and Newbury, 2001.) She also highlights the several national women's organizations that were founded in the late 1980s, including Duterimbere, a women's banking and micro-lending cooperative modelled on the Grameen Bank; Haguruka, an advocacy group for women and children's legal rights; and *Réseau des femmes œuvrant pour le développement rural*, an organization that provided technical assistance to rural women's organizations (Burnet 2011).

Finally, she argues that despite the significant contributions made by the international community, the Rwandan women's movement in the mid-to-late 1990s should be viewed as being principally indigenous rather than simply driven by outside forces (Ibid). While the Rwandan women's organizations would not have been able to make as much of an impact without international aid, the majority of the local organizations did not allow the agendas of international partners to drive their work plans (Ibid).

Survey of Case Study Literature: Argentina

While the case study of Rwanda presents discourse around institutionalizing women's political participation, it leaves many questions about getting women to run for office in the absence of a demographic vacuum or getting them elected amidst a choice of several candidates. The Argentine case helps fill some of these gaps. In 1991, Argentina became the first democratic

country to implement a national *candidate* gender quota, which requires all political parties competing in national elections to nominate at minimum percentage of female candidate (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). The quota has had remarkable success in increasing the number of women elected to office and provides a valuable case study in examining the substantive effect of such a quota law on the implementation of women's rights legislation.

The current Argentine political system emerged after an eight-year military dictatorship, which ended in 1983. It operates using a bicameral legislature: a lower house, the Chamber of Deputies, and an upper house, the Senate. In November 1991 the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies passed a gender quota law for Chamber of Deputies elections following a strong Argentine feminist movement in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Gray 2003). This law required that party lists of viable candidates for office include at least 30 percent women, and that these women were placed in 'electable' positions on the lists, not only in 'ornamental positions.' Non-compliant party lists were to be rejected under the law (Gray 2003).

Consensus within the literature holds that this policy has proven immensely effective in increasing the proportion of women in Argentinian elected office. Between 1983 and 1991, women comprised four percent of all legislators in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate (Gray 2003). By 1995, women comprised 28 percent of elected deputies. The same year, the Chamber of Deputies became the national legislative body to have the highest percentage of democratically elected females in the Western hemisphere (Gray 2003). Scholars, such as Mark Jones (1998), Tricia Gray (2003), Susan Franceschet and Jennifer Piscopo (2008), have further pointed to the 'contagion' or 'demonstrative' effect of the quota law, that is, the extent to which similar laws have been adopted in other governmental bodies and at the sub-federal level. The analysis portion of this policy paper will investigate this effect further.

Some scholars attribute the success of the law to grassroots women's organizations, which were prevalent in Argentina during its transition to democracy. For example, Franceschet and Piscopo (2008) argue that approval and implementation of the law faced significant obstacles from male politicians that viewed the law in zero-sum terms. They specifically point to the role of the National Women's Council in challenging numerous non-compliant party lists in the 1993 elections. Scholars, however, also point to the role of former President Carlos Menem and the 1994 Attorney General Ángel Nicolás Agüero Iturbe in ensuring the law's success (Gray 2003). The subsequent analysis of this case will evaluate the role of grassroots organizations in the process leading up to the law's proposal and in its approval and implementation.

While scholars agree that the quota law has been beneficial in increasing women's descriptive representation in the legislative branch, Franceschet and Piscopo (2008) in particular argue that there remain areas for improvement. For instance, they point to the lack of diversity in female candidates and the ensuing negative stereotype of female legislators as 'quota women', i.e.

women nominated to fill the place of their successful male husbands. Franceschet and Piscopo argue that this negative stereotype impedes the legislative progress female politicians are able to make in advancing women's interests. The substantive effect of the quota law, therefore, remains to be investigated in the later sections of this paper along with various solutions to the current challenges presented.

As such, the Argentine case study will seek to answer the following policy questions:

To what extent has the quota law produced a contagion effect? How have the effects of this policy increased female political participation outside of the legislative branch?

What role did grassroots organizations play in this process?

To what extent has the quota law had a tangible impact in advancing a women's rights agenda in legislation? To what extent do gender stereotypes impede the efficacy of this policy, and what are potential solutions to overcome remaining obstacles?

Survey of Case Study Literature: Sénégal

Like Argentina, Sénégal quota system called "parity" has also successfully increasing the number of women in politics. However, unlike Argentina Sénégal's law has helped modify stereotypical views of women. Sénégal passed its parity law in 2010, which has significantly increased women's political participation in the country. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word "parity" as "the state or condition of being equal, especially as regards status or pay." Sénégal's parity law mandates that women represent 50% of the candidates put forth by political parties in both national and local elections (Hirsch 2012). Sénégal's constitution laid the groundwork for the parity law while many organizations fought for its realization. Though Sénégal's parity law has widely opened the political realm for its women, the country's patriarchal practices, as many have suggested, have tenaciously resisted this law.

Since its adoption, the parity law has generated opposing views. Many celebrated the law in June 2011 during the International Conference on Parity at Dakar's Meridien Hotel (Sillah 2011). Senegalese activists and government officials, as well as UN Women representatives, attended conference emphasizing the law's importance in growing the country's economy. Sénégal's president Abdoulaye Wade said, "Parity is not only a democratic requirement, but also a fundamental principle for sustainable development" (Sillah 2011). During the country's parliamentary elections of 2012, parliamentarian Aida Mboj and Helen Tine criticized the disregard of "absolute parity." Mboj reemphasized that the "parity law covers not only the entry of women in the National Assembly, it concerns all the institutions of elected bodies" (Seneweb 2014).

However, not everyone welcomes the law. Some political parties refuse to respect it, especially candidates affiliated with religious leaders of Touba, the holy city of Mouridism in central Sénégal. Touba has excluded both women and the youth from its electoral list, which should

have disqualified its male candidates, but the latter were still expected to participate in the elections (Seneweb 2013). Politician Jean Paul Dias called it “a demagogic institutional law” and “socially dangerous ” (Seneweb 2014). In our phone interview, a female Senegalese parliamentarian, who asked to remain anonymous, said that religion and pressures of marriage are among the main factors restraining Senegalese women from both entering and succeeding in politics (March 27, 2017). “Touba does not respect parity due to the realities of our country,” (Anonymous, interview March 27, 2017). It worth mentioning that Touba’s attitude towards parity is not an exception in the religious realm, not the rule. Tøraasen (2016) writes, “I have not found any signs of strong religious counter-mobilization against parity adoption. I attribute this to the waning political power of the marabouts and the duality of the Senegalese society,” (Tøraasen 2016 p.99). Anonymous noted that the total elected body of Senegal’s National Assembly is 150; its women currently number 64 instead of 75, which the parity law theoretically mandates “Parity has resolved the issue of electing women, but its proper application still remains” (interview, March 27, 2017). Abdoulaye Sy, my informant on Sénégal’s parity agreed. “The law lacks effective measures of implementation; thus many have yet to embrace it” (Sy, interview January 28, 2017).

Today among the over 500 mayors in Sénégal less than 20 are women, Anonymous (2017) added. “It’s a battle.” The law did not taken into account some locations in Sénégal where only one member of Parliament could be elected. As a result, men usually end up being elected in these places, Anonymous (2017) explained. The general consensus of those against the law is that Sénégal “is not yet socially ready to implement parity” (Seneweb). Many rural Senegalese women equate the word “parity” with rejecting their husbands’ authority (Hirsch 2012). However, women’s groups have went to the most remote areas of Sénégal both while campaigning for parity and when it became law to inform and later to train those women on electoral lists to prepare for their roles in National Assembly (Anonymous, interview, March 27, 2017). Still Moustapha Diakhate, the parliamentary president of the party Benno Bokk Yakaar, insisted that “the laws of the Republic shall apply to all citizens,” (Seneweb). These passionate debates around parity might linger in Sénégal for a while, because the law has generated a “culture shock” for many, particularly the men who believe that a woman’s place is only in the kitchen.

Others believe the law has not improved the lives of Senegalese women. While comparing the state of Canadian and Senegalese women, Catherine Porter (2014) concluded that “Senegalese women are second-class citizens.” She cites polygamy, early marriages, and unfair inheritance laws as direct barriers to Senegalese women. However, Seynabou Wade (former mayor of Gueule Tapée-Fass-Colobane in Dakar) reminded Porter of a problem in Canada has well: “Women in your country should have the courage to accept polygamy. It’s better than having mistresses.” Dr. Oumoul Khairy Agne Wane, a pharmacist in Dakar, is more concerned with the degree of women’s qualification for the parliamentary positions and their effectiveness in

advancing the country various agendas. “I like the idea of supporting women, but they must be competent for the positions they seek” (Wane, interview February 11, 2017). She added that imposing 50% of elected women even if they are unable to perform their tasks properly due to insufficient education is not a good idea. Anonymous (2017), who holds a master’s degree, pushed back against this argument. “One of the most important task of being a parliamentarian is to speak for one’s constituents, and these women are doing that,” she said. She insisted that the less educated female parliamentarians understand the issues of the people they represent and fiercely advocate for them. Anonymous (2017) conceded that these women struggle with the “technical” aspect of the work which centered on reading budget documents and participating in its debates. Anonymous (2017) also noted that the language of budget documents are difficult to understand even among the most educated like herself. She points out that the women in the National Assembly have diverse backgrounds. They include professors, elementary school teachers, former cabinet members, university students, and the less educated, who are a minority. “It is a mix profiles of competence and journeys,” Anonymous (2017) said.

Nonetheless, many still recognize the value of parity. Anonymous (2017) said the law has modified some long-standing perceptions about women’s role and has built their confidence. “Women were not included in any decision making spaces. Today parity is allowing women to affirm themselves in society” (Anonymous, interview March 27, 2017). Moreover, the law led to improved working relations among female and male parliamentarians (Tøraasen, 2016). Tøraasen (2016) added that “an overwhelming majority – both among current and former, male and female parliamentarians – claimed that one of the most important consequences of the parity law was that the female deputies could act as role models for other women.” Sénégal’s case shows that implementing a gender parity law can be effective both in increasing women’s political participation and in modifying stereotypical views of women’s roles in society.

The Sénégal’s case study will examine similar issues to that of Argentina’s while investigating these additional questions:

- Did Sénégal’s parity law take into account all of political realities of the country while electing people?
- Has parity been properly implemented?
- How does education influence politics Sénégal?
- Has there been specific legislations passed targeting women?
- Has the number of women in government increased?
- What role has Sénégal’s official language French played in its politics?

Research Question:

The goal of our research question is to better understand how different policies that have been used in the past to reach gender equality in the political landscape each increase the number of women in political offices and/or improve their effectiveness at affecting the policies discussed.

Through this exploration of several methods, we will gain a more thorough understanding of what has been done so far, what methods are effective, and what is missing from these policies that we can add in to formulate policy proposals? In order to achieve a more balanced political system, it is necessary to have accurate representation. As described in our introduction, worldwide, membership in political spheres is dominated by men. Answering this research question will help us create more representative political circles, the benefits of which were also discussed in our introduction. The terms relevant to this policy discussion, such as gender parity v. quota laws, have already been addressed in our literature review, so they do not need to be addressed here.

Policy Analysis:

The two main types of policies to increase women's political participation we will be analyzing in the following case studies and presentation of research are parity laws and gender quotas. There are several types of each method, but we will only be analyzing those policies relevant to our case studies. France implemented a parity law requiring all candidate lists presented by political parties for elections at every level of government to be equal in women and male representation, in addition to a constitutional revision including a clause on equal access of men and women to electoral mandates, Rwanda provides an example of an equality of result quota system, in which a minimum number of seats in parliament is guaranteed to be for women; they are "women-only" positions. In Argentina, a national candidate gender quota is used; it requires that the list of viable candidates for office that each political party presents includes at least 30 percent women *and* that these women are put forth for 'electable' positions rather than nominal ones. Party lists that do not meet these requirements are to be rejected by law. Finally, in Sénégal, a parity law is implemented, which mandates that, similarly to Argentina, 50 percent of the candidates presented by each political party are women, in *both* national and local elections. Each of these approaches will be further delved into and analyzed in the following case studies.

Case Studies:

France Case Study:

Marie-Therese Eyquem and Yvette Roudy of the Parti socialiste (PS) made the first formal demand to increase women's political representation in the 1970s. Their close ties with the PS's new leader, Francois Mitterrand, allowed them to integrate a sex-based quota in the party's internal rules that applied to the party's leadership positions and candidacies. It was initially set at 10% women in 1974 and then raised to 30% in 1990, as feminist activists lobbied the government. However, the quota was not successful at achieving equal representation within the PS (Bereni 2007).

Two additional attempts at achieving equal representation via quota system were conducted in 1979 and 1982. In 1979, under a right wing government, Monique Pelletier, head of the Ministry of the Feminine Condition and the Family, sponsored a bill that would create a 20% sex-based

quota on municipal candidate lists. The bill passed in the National Assembly by a large majority, but that year's parliamentary session ended before the bill could be debated in the Senate (Bereni, 2007) (Opello, 2006).

In 1982, Gisele Halimi, president of the moderate women's rights group Choisir and a deputy affiliated with the Parti socialiste, was elected to the National Assembly and persuaded the PS to propose an amendment stating that party candidate lists in local elections should include no more than 75% of persons of the same sex, essentially implementing a 25% quota in local candidacy lists. The National Assembly passed the bill almost unanimously, but the bill was overruled by Constitutional Council on November 18, 1982. The Council's reasoning was that the founding principles of the French Republic were in opposition to 'any division of voters or candidates by category'. This decision by the Constitutional Council reinforced the legal basis for the gender-neutral republican universalist nature of discourse surrounding women's representation of the time and made it hard for feminist organizations to maintain the case for affirmative action. It was, essentially, the death of the movement for quotas (Bereni, 2007) (Opello, 2006).

In 1989, the feminist movement for equal political representation came back to life, this time, driven by the concept of parity. The scholarly discourse on parity has already been reviewed in the literature review, and the culmination of those discussions surrounding parity catalyzed a movement pushing for the implementation of parity. The movement brought together women of different political parties, feminist organizations and scholars, and femocrats around a common slogan. In the early 90s, a surge of new women's groups, such as Parité, Parité 2000, Parité-infos, and Assemblée des femmes, and networks of women's organizations, such as Elles Aussi, Réseau Femmes pour la parité, Demain la Parité, and Réseau Femmes et Hommes pour la parité, emerged to support the movement. The push for parity involved both female politicians and women outside of the political system, truly integrating the work of grassroots organizations and drawing on the advantage of a strong, positive public perception of parity. From 1993 to 2000, these independent organizations pressured political parties, government leaders, and the media to support parity through conferences, meetings, manifestos, public opinion polls, letter-writing campaigns to political leaders, newsletters, newspaper articles, demonstrations in front of Parliament, etc. Two manifestos in particular helped advance the parity cause: the Manifeste des 577 pour une démocratie paritaire, signed by 289 women and 288 men, and the Manifeste des dix pour la parité, signed by 10 prominent French female politicians from the major political parties. Several French feminist intellectuals also publicly expressed their commitment to parity by publishing articles and essays in mainstream public arenas (media, political, and academic) (Bereni 2007).

Their efforts were successful, and as early as June of 1994, six lists presented at the European election were parities, including the PS's list. A year later, the parity movement gained support from the main candidates of the presidential election. Once elected, Jacques Chirac created the

‘Observatory of Parity Between Men and Women’ in October of 1995, which was a state-level body focused on developing strategies to increase women’s presence and participation in politics. The Observatory released a report in December of 1996 that argued for a revision of the constitution and for a law imposing sex-based quotas in candidacies, i.e. support for parity. The right wing government actually remained indifferent to the recommendations of the Observatory’s report, but the PS, the leading opposition party at the time, rallied in support of these recommendations (Bereni 2007).

In 1996, Lionel Jospin became the new leader of the Parti socialiste; the PS made several changes to its platform and structure internally under his leadership. It ensured equal representation of women within the party by setting aside almost 30% of candidacies for women in the upcoming legislative election in 1997, listed parity as a step towards the renovation of democracy, and included ‘institutional renovation’ via equal representation of women, which was expected to bring about a renewal of political practices and ideas, in its party platform, thus making it a topic of importance in the next election. This commitment of the PS to the feminist organizations’ work for equal representation was key in achieving constitutional reforms and legal parity, and actually won them the 1997 election, making Lionel Jospin the new Prime Minister of France (Bereni 2007).

Jospin pushed for the revision of the Constitution to include a parity clause and sponsored a constitutional bill on the equal access of women and men to electoral mandates in 1998. Intellectual and political elites responded with intense public controversy expressed in the press and parliamentary arenas; most of the opponents to constitutional reform were members of the Senate’s right wing majority. However, feminist activists, the leaders of both party majorities (Lionel Jospin and Jacques Chirac), and the media all worked to ensure the success of constitutional reform. The media played a big role in this work and often described the Senate opponents as reactionary by pointing out that women’s suffrage had been repeatedly rejected by a majority of senators during the inter-war years. Parliament adopted the constitutional reform in June of 1999 and a year later, an electoral law was passed defining the specifics of a parity legislation which required parties to field equal numbers of men and women in legislative, European, and regional elections and in local and senatorial elections for larger districts. The legislation passed without much public controversy, and most pro-parity movements faded away after this success (Bereni 2007).

Rwanda Case Study:

In Rwanda, the second half of the twentieth century was marked by widespread violence, particularly between the Hutu and Tutsi groups who battled for power. This conflict persisted for decades, ultimately culminating in the infamous Rwandan genocide in 1994. Hutu extremists killed about one million people (predominantly Tutsis) within one hundred days. The Rwandan Genocide of 1994 brought about significant demographic changes. Since the tactics of many

Hutu men included killing men and raping women, more women survived the genocide than men. As a result, Rwanda's population comprised about 70 percent women (Bennet 2014). These skewed demographics created a power vacuum (Ibid). That is, circumstances mandated that Rwandan women stepped up as leaders in various realms (especially Politics), so as to help rebuild the country (Ibid). Prior to 1994, women held only 10 to 15 percent of seats in parliament (Bennet 2014). However, in the late 1990's the Rwandan government started taking significant steps towards increasing women's equal participation, not just in politics but in society as a whole. This was done by passing groundbreaking legislation that gave women gave women the right to own and inherit land, the right to open a bank account without the authorization of a male figure, and afforded special rights and protections to children (Bennet 2014).

In 2003, the Rwandan government sanctioned a new constitution which introduced a quota system designed to increase female representation in government at all levels. The legislation effectively guaranteed that at least 30 percent of all representatives were women. Rwanda's quota system differs from many of its international counterparts in the sense that it is not a quota solely on candidates, but rather guarantees a minimum number of seats for women. This is often referred to as an Equality of Result Quota system (Bennet 2014). The elections held in September 2013 brought about a significant increase in the number of women in the lower house of parliament from 23 percent to 49 percent (Ibid). However, the progress did not stop there. In 2008, during the next election cycle, the women who rose to prominence in their women-reserved seats, decided to use their knowledge and experience to run for regular seats, thereby providing opportunity for a new set of women to take up the women-only positions (Ibid). The direct impact of this was clear to see, as 56 percent of those elected to the House of Deputies in 2008 were women, and in 2013 women's representation rose even further to about 64 percent (Ibid).

Rwanda's parliamentarians have made considerable effort to ensure that equal membership in parliament translates into wider development objectives which cater to the needs of women and children particularly, given that these groups are the most susceptible to poverty and have the biggest barriers to overcome in society (Grabham 2016). There have been several key areas where women's rights and participation have been advocated, leading to positive change. One of these areas is land ownership (Grabham 2016). Women's access to land in Rwanda has been significantly improved by two major pieces of legislation: The Succession Law (1999) and the Land Law (2005). (Ibid.) These laws meant that women received equal inheritance rights which would be protected after marriage as well as equal rights to purchase land (Ibid). Women now own a greater proportion of land in Rwanda (about 26 percent) than men (about 18 percent) (Ibid). With greater land entitlement, women are now able to build up more credit and pursue alternative income-generating ventures (Ibid).

To further create equal opportunity for all, the Rwandan government also introduced gender-

sensitive budgets into all ministries (Grabham 2016). This has had significant impact particularly in terms of health and education. Rwanda has attained the millennium development goal of universal primary education for girls and boys and has ensured that more girls have the opportunity to pursue a higher education (Grabham 2016). Health indicators have also improved considerably, including those which explicitly pertain to women (Ibid). For instance, maternal mortality rates decreased from 1070 per 100,000 in 2005 to 476 in 2010 (Ibid). Fertility rates also went down from 6.1 children per woman in 2005 to 4.1 in 2010 (Ibid).

Although the quota system has been successful in the Rwandan context, this might not necessarily be the case across the board. The initial 30% minimum of women-reserved seats set by the 2003 constitution merely served as a starting point from which women could get a foothold in the political arena. This point was echoed eloquently by Hon. J. Kasengwa, a Rwandan MP who said that *“It is true that gender equality in political participation goes beyond just numbers, but numbers must be there in the first place, then these numbers must be modelled into effective, able resources to be used to secure gender equality in political participation, including influencing and shaping political will of all the stakeholders, to gender equality”* (Grabham 2016).

Overall, public perception following the Rwandan genocide was one of shock and dismay. Thus, Rwandans in the country as well as those who fled, slowly came together to rebuild. Significantly, women from both sides of the conflict united to encourage rehabilitation and reconciliation. The Rwandan Patriotic Front led by General Paul Kagame made clear that women would play a significant role in how post-genocidal Rwanda would progress and this was not met by any significant resistance. In fact, it was widely accepted.

Certain institutional structures put in place have been absolutely crucial for the progression of women in Rwanda (Grabham 2016). The National Women’s Council, Gender Monitoring Office and Rwanda Women’s Parliamentary Forum (FFRP) have contributed greatly towards ensuring that the positive change concerning women’s rights is sustainable in the long-run, and that deep-rooted cultural challenges such as Gender Based Violence can be eradicated once and for all (Ibid). Gender Based Violence was first criminalized in 2008 with the Law on Prevention and Punishment of Gender Based Violence (Ibid). Even though there were difficulties faced in attempting to pass this law through a senate dominated by men, it eventually passed due to widespread support at local government level.

Argentina Case Study:

As previously discussed, the descriptive impact of the 1991 Argentine quota law at the national level has been quite impressive. Following the abysmal 4 percent female representation in parliament immediately prior to the quota law, in 2016 women comprised 35.8 percent of the Chamber of Deputies and 41.7 percent of the Senate (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2016). The

'demonstrative' or 'contagion' effect of the policy at lower levels has been just as impressive. In 2001, the 30 percent quota was applied to Senate. This quota requires that the first two positions on a party list include one male and one female, which, given the election system in which the majority party wins at least two seats, every district will have at least one female senator out of three. Similar quota systems have also spread to the election of national labor union officers and provincial legislatures (Gray 2003). For instance, by 1997, 21 of Argentina's 24 provinces (and federal capital) had enacted similar gender quota laws for the election of legislators (Jones 1998). In 2006, 27.9 percent of all provincial deputies were women (Hinojosa 2009), demonstrating the effectiveness of spreading gender parity measures at various levels of politics.

As scholars have often pointed to the machismo political culture in Latin America as an impediment to female empowerment, the success of the Argentine quota is noteworthy and offers insight regarding the implementation of gender parity measures in face of cultural barriers. The success of the Argentine parity initiative finds its roots in several places: the historical precedent of an unofficial quota and the active mobilization of women's organizations.

In the early 1950s, Argentina experienced relatively high numbers of women in parliament due to a 30 percent quota rule applied by the governing Justicialist Party (PJ) for women in party organs and elected positions. This move was largely motivated by the party's desire to expand its voter base from mainly labor unionists to include women (Krook 2005). Then-President Juan Domingo's wife, Maria Eva Duarte de Peron (commonly referred to as Evita), was a beloved popular figure and was personally responsible for selecting the female candidates for PJ. She insisted that women be placed in districts where they had reasonable chances of being elected. Given that all of the female parliamentarians from 1952-55 represented the Justicialist Party, Eva was largely responsible for the high proportion of women in parliament during that time. After Eva's death in 1952, the PJ continued to champion women's causes, and it successfully increased women's representation in the Chamber of Deputies from 15.5 percent in 1952 to 21.7 percent in 1955, which ranked Argentina fourth in the world in for female representation in parliament (Krook 2005). The 1955 military coup that overthrew the Peronist government, however, reversed the substantial progress made in female representation. When the next democratically elected government took office in 1963, only one woman (.5 percent of parliament) served in the Chamber of Deputies (Krook 2005). Nevertheless, this experience served as a precedent for the gender quota to follow and acutely demonstrated the large effect derived from a popular governing party that championed female representation.

During Argentina's second military dictatorship from 1976-1983, grassroots women's organizations began to develop that proved crucial in paving the way for the 1991 quota law. Women increasingly began to organize collectively and, in doing so, became key political actors in the country's democratic transition. The most prominent women's group was the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, a group of mothers that formed during the dictatorship in an attempt to find

their “disappeared” sons. Every Thursday morning they carried photos of their missing children and marched to protest the repressive regime. Today they still march weekly in remembrance. These mothers thus politicized and mobilized their femininity, wearing white kerchiefs to symbolize the diapers of their missing children, in efforts bring about political change (Hinojosa 2009).

When the disappointing turnout of 1983 elections revealed that democracy alone was not sufficient to ensure female political representation, women’s groups began looking abroad for strategies to increase the number of female parliamentarians. They learned about gender quota strategies namely through political party networks – e.g. contacts with women in the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE), German Social Democratic Party (SPD), Italian ex-Communist Party (PDI), Uruguay Broad Front (FA), Chilean Socialist Party (PS), and the Brazilian Workers’ Party (PT) – and through civil society, for instance attending the United Nations Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985 and the 1989 Socialist International conference in Stockholm (Krook 2005). This increased awareness across the political spectrum about gender equity measures combined with an overall increase in feminist activism in Argentina in the 1980s led to the creation of a cross-party contact group pressing for the passage of a national quota law by the end of 1989 (Krook 2005).

When the to-be quota law was proposed by the Civic Radical Union in 1989, strong feminist activism proved critical in the bill’s approval. Women across all parties worked together to ensure that one woman had spoken with each man in the Chamber of Deputies. They also mobilized women around the country to lobby their legislators in favor of the bill, while embarking on a media campaign to educate journalists and reporters on the need for quotas. Feminist organizations in Buenos Aires reached out to each individual deputy by letter or phone call in the days leading up to the Chamber of Deputies vote, and on the day of the vote, women from all over the country marched on the capital to hold a ‘vigil for the quota’ until the law was passed (Krook 2005).

After its approval, the law faced significant opposition from male legislators and general antagonism from the federal prosecutors tasked with ensuring its implementation. In 1993, the first election following the law’s passage, multiple party lists were non-compliant. Several male legislators even made comments to female deputies in parliament explicitly stating that they did not intend to comply with the quota law (Krook 2005). Women’s organizations again played a critical role in the ensuing legal battles for the law’s full implementation. Most notably the Cabinet of Female Presidential Advisors, the National Council of Women, and women from various political parties set out on a campaign to identify all non-compliant lists and provide free legal support to women seeking to challenge violations in court. They further utilized a strong network of female journalists to publicize the violations. Overall, this campaign resulted in more than thirty lawsuits (Krook 2005).

Constitutional reforms in 1994, which occurred for reasons independent of the quota debates, served to bolster the quota law. Whereas previously only individual women running for office were able to legally contest their party's candidate list – and often at great professional cost – the 1994 reforms allowed for affiliates of a party to contest his or her party's list and the National Women's Council to contest any party list. In 1994, the then-Attorney General further demanded full protection of the law from federal prosecutors. In the 1995 elections, all 66 parties complied (Gray 2003). Ultimately, it appears undeniable that if not for persistent grassroots efforts from women's organizations, the law's success would not have been possible.

The bottom-up nature in which the quota law was introduced has produced what some term as a 'mandate effect', the perceived obligation among elected female officials to act on behalf of women due to the collective struggle that made their election possible. In interviews numerous female legislators acknowledged that they likely would not have been elected to office if the quota law had not opened political space for women. Noting that the quota pioneers emphasized equality, social justice, and women's historical marginalization in their long fights for female representation, female legislators expressed a sense of obligation to address these issues (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). They further noted that the fight for the quota had strengthened the relationship between the women's movement and women in politics, and after the law's passage parliament witnessed a record numbers of female activists turned politicians (Franceschet and Piscopo 408). Studies show that although party attitudes influence stances on legislative issues, women in conservative parties are generally more progressive than their male counterparts on women's issues (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). The experience of extensive cross-party collaboration in the struggle for the quota law has further led women across parties to continue collaborating within parliament, despite the fact that female legislators have not formed an official women's caucus.

Thus, while the quota law has been remarkably successful with regards to increasing female descriptive representation largely due to the grassroots efforts of women's organizations, there remain a couple areas for improvement. First, the proportion of women in appointed positions has lagged behind female progress in elected positions. While in the 1980s some women were occasionally appointed to traditionally 'feminine' ministries, such as education, culture, and the environment, overall cabinet representation was low. In 1992, President Menem set up a shadow cabinet of women that had no real powers and no financing, but that was intended to advise cabinet members. Since 2000, women have been appointed to traditionally more influential ministries, such as the Ministry of Labor in 2002 and the Ministries of Defense and Economy in 2005 (Hinojosa 2009). The election of a female president in 2007 appears to have had little effect in cabinet-level female representation. While her male successor's ministries did feature a greater proportion of men, with only 11 percent of ministers being women, former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (CFK) staffed 19 percent female ministers. In both the current

administration and the CFK administration, only 13 percent of secretariats are headed by women (Sibilla 2016).

Second, the Argentine model has been less successful in promoting women of diverse backgrounds to office. Anecdotal evidence, supplemented by the election of President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner who was immediately preceded by husband, President Nestor Kirchner, implies that in many cases women are nominated by their parties in place of their successful male husbands. These women are labeled “mujeres de” (literally, “women of [a man]”), that is, wives or relatives of male party leaders (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). While this practice is problematic in failing to bring diverse and merit-based women to office, it also creates a negative stereotype about female legislators as simply ‘quota women’ that can be harmful to their prospects in politics. The media treatment of former President CFK confirms this phenomenon. CFK was portrayed as a political puppet of her husband, former President Kirchner, despite serving in parliament for ten years before her presidential election. Her governance was coined “double command,” and when her husband died in 2010 one newspaper reported, “Nestor was the political leader. This completely changes the situation of the country” (van Dembroucke 2014). Given that the critique of the “mujeres de” stems largely from their relationship with male politicians, encouraging women from differing backgrounds to run for office could help overcome the negative stereotype and diversify female representation.

Lastly, the effect of the Argentine quota law on women’s substantive representation, that is, the promotion of women’s interests, has been mixed. Research indicates that overall the quota law has effectively altered the policy agenda to greater include women’s issue. The average number of bills introduced per year concerning women’s rights in 2001 to 2007, when women’s presence in both legislative houses first exceeded 30 percent, increase 268% compared to the five years prior. Remarkably, the number of bills introduced to combat violence against women increased 500% in the same period (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008).

Agenda change however does not necessarily entail policy change, and research shows that women’s rights legislation still fails almost twice as often as the average bill in Argentina (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). In a 2013 study, Mala Htun, Marina Lacalle, and Juan Pablo Micozzi collected information on all 172,130 bills submitted to parliament from 1983 to 2007, and identified 3,272 bills, or 1.8 percent of the whole sample, as “women’s rights bills.” They found that 18 percent of women’s bills were approved, in contrast with the 28 percent approval rate for other bills. When accounting for increased female presence in parliament, Htun et al found that the probability of a bill’s approval actually dropped. However, this result can to some extent be accounted for by the significant increase in the number of bills proposed, some of which may overlap in content (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). Interviews with legislators further reveal that support from party leaders is necessary for a bill’s success. Many women’s rights bills die in committees before reaching to floor. As one female legislator remarked, “it’s totally up to the committee chair [whether a bill advances]” (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008,

416).

While obstacles certainly still exist, female legislators in Argentina, interviewed in 2008, point to several key successes since the implementation of the quota law in 1991. In 2001, congress passed the Sexual Health Law, which created a national program for increased access to contraception and sexual health education. In 2002, the Labor Union Quota Law extended the 30 percent female requirement to leadership posts in labor unions. Lastly, in 2006 congress passed the Surgical Contraception Law which expanded on the 2001 Sexual Health Law by making surgical contraception methods, such as vasectomies, legal and available in public hospitals (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). Notably, these legislative successes occurred several years after the quota law was originally implemented. The key legislative successes since 2008 remain to be investigated.

Sénégal Case Study:

Unlike Argentina quota system, Sénégal's parity law has attracted diverse women into the political arena but suffers from a similar small number of female appointments. Also different is that out of our four cases, Sénégal's parity law was first applied only about five years ago, which is much shorter time compared to the other countries.

A former colony of France located in West Africa, Sénégal became independent in 1960. The country's population is estimated at 15,129,273 people with 50.9% women. About 94% of Senegalese identify themselves as Muslims, 4% as Christians, and 2% as other.

The country's female parliamentary representation grew from 0% in the years following independence, to 22% from 2008 to 2012, to 43% from 2012 to 2017. This significant progress was due largely to the country's 2010 parity law, passed under the country's third president, Abdoulaye Wade. The law was first tested in Sénégal's 2012 election when the country's fourth president, Macky Sall, assumed power. Following the election, 64 of the 150 new representatives in the country's national assembly were women. Sénégal is multicultural and multiethnic society, but it still managed to have parity among a multitude of perspectives and societal roadblocks.

Since its independence, Sénégal has legally embraced the idea of equality among its citizens. Also known as a poet and writer, Léopold Sédar Senghor was Sénégal's first president, serving from 1960 to 1980 and participating in crafting the new republic's constitution ("Biography of Leopold Sedar Senghor"). According to the first article of the country's 1963 constitution, "Sénégal is secular, democratic and social. It ensures equality before the law for all citizens, without distinction of origin, race, sex, religion" (Sénégal Constitution 1963). From the age of 18, Senegalese females and males can vote for their political leaders. Political parties are to refrain from identifying with "a particular race, ethnic group, gender, religion, sect, a language or origin." The constitution insists that "Men and women have equal rights," in addition to

guaranteeing freedom of speech and religion. It is clear that dating back to the days of Sénégal's independence, the country has welcomed the notion of equality between its female and male.

As Sénégal's constitution underwent some amendments under President Abdoulaye Wade in 2001, the document became more explicit on women's rights. Article 15 states that "the man and the woman have the right to accede to the possession and to the ownership of land within the conditions determined by the law" (Constitution 2001 with Amendments through 2009). According to article 19, women have the right to manage their own assets. Article 22 affirms that boys and girls "have the right of acceding to school." Gender has not been mentioned as a factor to qualify for the country's president. Gradually, Sénégal has added favorable laws regarding women in its constitution -- a change that could be attributed both to the country's grassroots organizations and its female elected officials. Senegal represents a unique case, as the country has passed both a parity law and accompanied this action with constitutional changes.

Many Senegalese organizations have contributed to the passing of the parity law. One such organization is the Senegalese Women's Council (COSEF) created in 1995 (COSEF 2011). The organization brings together diverse women leaders from politics, members of the government, civil society groups, and entrepreneurs in an effort to advocate for more female participation in the country's politics, as well as their inclusion in its decision making process (COSEF 2011). The organization discussed its vision in major conferences including in Beijing in 1995. Pioneers of the group, like Maréma Touré, have addressed the marginalization of Senegalese women in politics with various leaders of the country's political parties. COSEF raised the idea of a political quota system during its 1998 campaign called "Democracy, where are you?"-- a slogan that evolved in 2005 into "With parity, let's consolidate democracy." The organization began a petition in 2005 and collected 4,000 signatures within six months, including that of prominent Senegalese political leaders (COSEF 2011). President Wade and the Senegalese Minister for Women were both informed of the petition.

On the international level, members of COSEF participated in the 52nd conference of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York in February 2006, where they collected additional signatures from their "sisters and brothers from elsewhere." A study of the COSEF's petition showed that diverse groups of Senegalese supported the parity campaign, including political leaders, senior government officials, business executives, doctors, and students. In 2009, COSEF petitioned some high-profile Muslim and Christian Senegalese leaders. To inform the Senegalese public about the parity campaign and attract support, COSEF members participated in television and radio shows, organized sit-ins, neighborhood discussions, and lobbied influential individuals in different sectors. Evidently, COSEF prioritized taking its case to numerous Senegalese of different backgrounds to attract a favorable public opinion to parity.

There has been strong momentum in Senegal to constitutionalize parity, rather than merely to legislate an increase in gender representation. Partnering with the country's Minister for Women, Aïda Mbodj, COSEF organized a march in Dakar, the capital city of Sénégal, on March 23, 2007 (COSEF, 2011). Mbodj led nearly 1,000 women dressed in white to walk from the Place of Independence to President Wade's residence, the Palace of the Republic. The women chanted "parité" and president Wade listened. On March 27, 2007, President Wade asked for a vote on "the law on parity" number 23/2007, which resulted on a law that called for a proportionality of gender representation in legislative elections. COSEF writes, "For the first time in the political history of Senegal, the term parity entered the legislative discourse," (COSEF 2011 p.35). About a dozen members of parliament (MPs) who opposed the law submitted an appeal to the country's Constitutional Council to repeal it (COSEF). These MPs's effort succeeded, and the parity law was declared unconstitutional on April 27, 2007. COSEF used this defeat as an opportunity to meet with President Wade and urge him to constitutionalize "the principle of parity." With the request of President Wade, the Senegalese Senate and National Assembly voted on parity, adding to article 7 of the constitution that "the law promotes equal access of women and men to mandates and functions." This amendment paved the way for future changes in Sénégal's electoral code. Undoubtedly, COSEF's clarity in its mission, unity among its members, and persistence with its goals prove to be strong assets in the organization's battle to boost the number of women in Sénégal's politics.

COSEF intensified its parity campaign by multiplying its meetings, seminars, and forums to hammer home the message, "equal access" in politics based on the constitution (COSEF, 2011). To further popularize the parity campaign, a famous Senegalese singer, Fatou Guewel Diouf, sang about the importance of the law for the country. During COSEF's many forums, tee-shirts with a parity slogan were distributed, which read, "Parity in the electoral code, an existence of women --" not to mention flyers with a "50/50" rallying cry. With the solid support of the Spanish Agency for Cooperation in International Development and the ongoing work of the Committee for Monitoring Parity, a national forum, called Pan-African Women's Day, took place on July 31, 2009 in Dakar's Meridien Hotel. Among the roughly one thousand attendees were COSEF's members and supporters, activists from every region of Sénégal and senior government officials. The country's prime minister at the time, Souleymane Ndéné Ndiaye, represented President Wade at the gathering. Ndiaye confirmed President Wade's commitment to constitutionalize parity, which would promote a more inclusive and equal democratic system in Sénégal (COSEF, 2011). The event was widely publicized by the media, and subsequent forums were organized across Sénégal to disseminate Wade's resolute support of parity. During the course of its campaign, COSEF has used every major success and failure as opportunities to popularize its parity cause and forge alliances -- an effective strategy of the organization's operation. The organization spent tremendous amount effort and energy to stay on message and persuade people to embrace parity.

Wade's position on parity gradually changed over the years, from limited support to full acceptance. Wade said in an interview on March 28, 2010 that in these modern times, women have more to offer than men do. As a result, he "will adopt absolute parity in all elective bodies." Wade expressed his contentment with COSEF's fight to achieve equal access in politics for Senegalese women. On May 14 and 19, 2010, Sénégal's parity law was voted on. It called for "absolute parity between men and women in total or partial elected institutions," such the country's Senate, and that "the list of candidates are alternatively composed of people of both sexes" (Seneweb). COSEF and all of the country's organizations that toiled for years in the name of parity were vindicated at last. Parity became law, and President Wade promulgated it on May 28, 2010. COSEF has expressed the significance of parity:

The law on parity is a way of life towards a change of perceptions and representations of long-conceived "power" lived in the masculine. From now on, in Senegalese soil, the experience of this power will have to be bisexual, in favor of future generations, new relationships between men and women (COSEF, 2011 p56).

The quote above sums up importance of this law – not just for Senegalese women, but also in terms of redefining the country's societal norms.

In addition to COSEF, many groups outside of the Senegalese government have been a force in shaping its politics. These organizations have fought not only to see parity become law in country, but have also come together to safeguard it (ONU Femmes). Coordinated by the Association of Senegalese Lawyers (AJS), Members of the Committee for the Defense of Parity and of the Republic is composed of about twenty groups and individuals fighting for human rights and the effective adoption of parity (femme jurists). The parity law was passed at a time when Senegalese women made up only 22% of the National Assembly. "There seems to have been a high level of activism among the female ex-parliamentarians, which is not surprising: it was them who campaigned and lobbied for parity in a parliament consisting of 77% men, an impressive achievement in terms of women's substantive representation" (Tørraasen, 2016) Though a disadvantage, their lower number in parliament did not prevent Senegalese female parliamentarians from galvanizing support in favor of parity. The various women's organizations played a crucial role the parity victory.

Even with the many hurdles, the parity law has influenced Senegalese society. Though slowly changing gender roles have been traditional, with men being the main breadwinners while women typically raise children and conduct household chores. Despite these obstacles, many are still optimistic about the direction in which the parity law has been taking the country. The 2012 incoming National Assembly voted for a law on July 8, 2013 called la Loi sur la Nationalite, which allows Senegalese woman married to non-Senegalese nationals to immediately transmit their nationality to their husbands and children. This right was solely reserved to Senegalese men

since 1961. For years, Senegalese women have fought for la Loi sur la Nationalite, and it finally became reality because of their increased number in parliament (Anonymous, interview March 27, 2017). The President of the National Observatory of Parity, Fatou Kiné Diop, said during the sixth anniversary of the law that it is changing the way Senegalese think about the power dynamic between men and women. The law is creating new norms in society; thus slowly breaking rigid perceptions of gender roles in Senegalese culture. Anonymous shares Diop's sentiment, "Parity has allowed for the women who have toiled in politics but not seen any advancement to get decisionmaking positions," (interview March 27, 17). In 2005-2006, a survey showed that 42.1% Senegalese strongly supported the parity law while in 2014-2015 number increased to 52.8% (Tøraasen, 2016). Among the countries in the world with the highest number of women in parliament, Sénégal ranks 7th and is in 2nd the African continent. Furthermore, other African countries have been paying attention to Sénégal's parity law. On November 2016, about 50 Guinean female members of parliament went to Sénégal's National Assembly for a working session with their committees to learn some of Sénégal's strategies as it relates to the parity law. On the world stage, Sénégal stands as a model country when it comes to including women in the political process. "We don't stay a month or two without being included in seminars regarding the advancement of women," Anonymous (2017) said. Parity has made Sénégal a prominent leader on women's political issues.

Understanding their hard fought victory, female member of Parliament (PMs) have taken steps to solidify their presence at the National Assembly. They practice solidarity regardless of their political party, which has amplified their voices. They have formed a group called "Reseau des Femmes Parlementaire" in which all the women parliamentarians are a part of. This platform allows women have both a stronger capability and support system. Awa Gueye, the vice-president of National Assembly, heads the group. Clearly, the women parliamentarians appreciate the importance of unity to accomplish their goals at the National Assembly. Additionally, the country has had some success in safeguarding the implementation of the parity law. Since the law calls for absolute men-women parity in all institutions with totally or partially elective positions, it impacts national, regional, municipal, and rural elections (ONU Femmes). For example, the July 2014 mayoral elections of Keur Massar (located the east of Dakar) violated the terms of the parity law and ended up electing eight officials including a mayor, all of whom were men with the exception of one woman. The case was taken to Dakar's Court of Appeal where in August 2014 its general assembly canceled the elections of the seven elected officials but declared the mayor's election constitutional (ONU Femmes). Though parity has yet to be well implemented in the country, the case above provides precedent that deter those who intend to ignore the law.

Meanwhile, over the years, Sénégal has seen more of its girls acquire education and its women trained. For primary school, the percentage of educated girls went from 15.5% in 2000 to 43% in 2010 (Gueye 2013). Between 2008 and 2012 up to 63, 4% girls attended primary school

(UNESCO). Though number of girls who attended secondary school dropped to 32.5% from 2008-2012 (UNICEF), organizations including the National Association for the Alphabetization and Adult Training (ANAFa), have been fighting since 1990 to educate and train more Senegalese adults with a special focus on women (Currant des Femmes). From 2000-2003, ANAFa trained 43 people, 41 of which were women, to use the computer translated in the Wolof language. The organization produced a national study on the potential benefit of micro-credit in the country to reduce poverty. With its creation of six batik workshops for women, ANAFa trained seven batik trainers and taught 72 women the practice of batik (anafaf.org). Organizations like ANAFa have stepped in to fill gap on the education and training of women, but more efforts is necessary to tackle the drastic decrease in number of girls attending secondary school.

Saidou Nourou Aw, principal at Wouro Sidy Middle School in Matam (located in East Sénégal) talked about some educational challenges Sénégal faces. He said his average classroom size is 50, with girls usually outnumbering boys (Aw, interview July 28, 2015). He noted that compared to boys, girls are often more intelligent and focused. "Girls are mentally stronger than boys," Aw stated. However, girls easily stop going to school because society does not attach much importance to their education, he added. Anonymous (2017) explained that early marriage and their parents limited income, especially those living in villages lead girls abandon school instead cooking and ran errands for their families. However, Anonymous (2017) also mentioned that the Senegalese government is fighting to keep girls in school and has a program in place tackling the issue (interview March 27, 2017). Aw also pointed out some flaws in Sénégal's education. "The difference between the educational system then and now is huge," Aw said. "Teachers were better trained, and there were less strikes. Today, teachers are weakly trained, and strikes are frequent. Before teacher were civil servant; now they work under a contract," (Aw, interview July 28, 2015). Evidently, Senegalese society has not been prioritizing girls' education and its devalued learning system has worsen the situation.

The issues surrounding education deeply impact society as a whole, especially women. According the UNICEF, between the years 2008-2012 among youth aged 15-24, 74.4% of males obtained an education, compared to only 56.2% of females. For some female MPs, insufficient formal education has meant they do not understand French, Sénégal's official, thus cannot fully participate in the National Assembly's debates -- a problem that some of their male counterpart also struggle with (Anonymous, interview March 27, 2017). To counterbalance this language barrier, Sénégal collaborated with the European Union to introduce listening translation devices to the country's National Assembly. The languages translated include Pulaar, Wolof, Sarakhoule, Serere, and Diola. However, all the National Assembly documents are only written in French. These MPs have yet to have support on reading these documents. "What I can say is even though the language is an obstacle, it doesn't stop women from doing their jobs," (Anonymous (2017) said. The lack of access to girls' education end up handicapping them as women. The

socioeconomic diversity at the National Assembly provide a voice to many women, especially rural ones. Girls and women proper access to education will benefit both Sénégal's politics and society as whole.

Though Sénégal has stood as an exemplary democracy in the African continent, it is still lagging behind in including more women in its government. The country's various presidents' cabinet members have mostly been men, and Sénégal has yet to have a female president. However, women have occupied key positions. Under President Wane, Mame Madior Boye served as the first female prime minister while Aminata Touré was the second woman prime minister in Sall's administration (Le Monde 2013). Both women's tenures lasted for about a year. Touré was the country's justice minister and known for fighting corruption, in addition to working as women's rights activist and human rights activists most of her adult life (Moshenberg 2013). Still, under the Touré government, only four women were among the 32 cabinet members. Likewise, in 2014 of the 39 newly announced presidential cabinet members only 7 were women (DakarActu). Moreover, for the first time in Sénégal, The Economic, Social and Environmental Council is led by a woman: Aminata Tall (Anonymous, interview March 27, 2017). In the current President Sall's government, six women hold cabinet positions of the minister of health, minister of tourism, minister of women, minister of public service, minister of breeding, and minister for promotion of investment. The parity law's effectiveness in doubling the number of women in the country's national assembly remains a signature achievement in Senegalese politics as well as its opening up the political sphere. Parity has allow women access to the highest levels in government; however, they still occupy few cabinet positions and may not necessarily themselves appoint more women if given the opportunity.

Nonetheless, the example below shows that having women in key cabinet positions has made a difference. Female cabinet members such as Aida Mbodj have been more likely to take up the causes affecting women and children. While serving as Minister of Women, the Family, and Social Development under Wade's presidency, Mbodj tackled issues of child begging and child labor in the country (State Department 2005). Some religious leaders use their students to earn income by subjecting them to begging. Mbodj began subsidizing underfunded Koranic schools from her ministry. Moreover, in 2004 Mbodj played an important role in having Sénégal sign an agreement with Mali (a neighboring West African country) to end child trafficking. By 2005, over 50 children were returned to Sénégal because of this agreement. She received a TIP Report Hero award in recognition of her work (U.S. Department of State 2005). As sees with Mbodj, women tend to be passionate to solve issues involving children and females.

Many Senegalese women have been politically engaged, but are almost invisible in their political parties' leadership positions. Women have been mobilize people around their political parties' agendas; they have outnumbered the men, and vote the most, yet they rarely lead Anonymous, interview March 27, 2017). "A significant number of women are involved in politics but are not

in leadership positions,” Anonymous 2017 said. For example, some political parties refuse to respect the parity so are candidates affiliated with religious leaders of Touba, the holy city of Mouridism in central Sénégal, (Tøraasen, 2016). Some of the male parliamentarians still resist the parity law (Tøraasen 2016). President Wade had a considerable power over the National Assembly thus influenced many of its members to vote in favor of the law even those who opposed it (Tøraasen 2016). Only three male MPs voted against the law (Sy, interview January 28, 2017). According to Kasse 1999 “What has been missing the most, when it comes to expanding women’s representation, is a genuine political will that goes beyond a declaration of principles.” The case of Sénégal notably introduces the importance of the political parties themselves into the discourse about the effectiveness of constitutionalizing parity.

A survey on Senegalese opinion about women in politics in shows a divide along gender lines; 37,2% of male respondents in 2005-2006 said that they strongly support women having the same chances as men of becoming an elected official compared 39% in 2014-2015. As for women, 47,3% of them strongly supported the idea increased female in politics in 2005-2006 by 2014-2015 the female approval went up to 66,7%. This survey shows the clear divides between the sexes when it comes to politics. Still, Anonymous (2017) provided a more nuanced explanation saying that men insist more on maintaining their higher hierarchical position in the family. “Today, if you ask a man on the street, he will tell you that he doesn't accept parity at home, but accepts it in the workplace,” she said. Evidently, gender difference continues to determine Senegalese views on parity.

Findings and Policy Proposals:

France’s case study is a testament to the importance of grassroots feminist organizations having party support and working with politicians to advance their agenda. Although sometimes regarded as radical, the presence of feminist organizations in this fight and their work with the Parti socialiste were key factors in the fight for parity. Without the partnership between the PS and feminist activists, the political progress needed would not have been pushed for to the extent that it was, and perhaps parity would not have been successful.

France and other Western countries are often portrayed and perceived as being societies in which men and women are treated equally, while non-Western countries are often stereotyped to be oppressive of women. While women’s equality is certainly a Western value, France and other Western countries are far from being role models on this ideal. Traditional gender roles still exist quite strongly in developed Western countries. Women are still societally expected to be the caretaker of the family and children, and this acts as a barrier to career development. In fact, a French government study conducted in 1999 confirmed that women still bear a shocking 80% of domestic tasks. Women still spend over three hours on domestic tasks every day, an amount only four minutes less than that recorded in 1986, and two hours more than men spend on domestic tasks. Educationally, over 56% of women have received higher education, but they still make up less than 5% of senior managers in the largest 200 French companies and earn an average of

20% less than men (Lambert 2001). Acknowledging that this problem *still* exists is the first step in addressing and resolving it. Given our research and analysis of varying policies, we recommend to Western policy makers to focus on removing these factors obstructing women's access to politics, such as lack of higher education and a cultural expectation to be the family's caretaker.

Changing any culture is a slow process that cannot be implemented through policy changes, but exposing girls to more opportunities to be involved in politics from a younger age can change their perception of what they "should" do in their careers. Allocating more government funding to programs that encourage women to build a career around politics, STEM fields, or otherwise non-traditional careers, especially programs that intervene in middle school, when girls have been shown to lose interest in non-traditional careers for women, such as politics, can increase the amount of women entering the field (Petroff 2017).

Another policy change that could be effective in tackling the issues blocking women's ability to fully invest in their political careers regards parental leave. By providing paid leave for both partners in a marriage, the burden of taking care of a newborn is not placed entirely on the biological mother and instead offers the opportunity for that job to be realistically shared by both parents, thus making it more possible for the biological mother to go back to work sooner. For marriages that involve a father and a mother, one hindrance to men taking paternity leave, when it is offered, is the financial risk it could cause for the family if it is not fully paid leave. Since men are on average paid more, it could be more damaging to the family's financial stability for the father to take paternity leave and be earning less, or none at all in cases of unpaid leave. In fact, 46% of men in France reported being 'not interested' in taking their full paternity leave, for reasons such as the potential economic instability that could result and fear of prejudice based on gender norms. However, in countries that offer more generous support, such as Germany, which introduced well paid bonus months for partners in 2007, the share of children whose fathers took parental leave increased by over 50% from 2008 to 2013. In Sweden, which pays men 60% of their salary while on leave, 45% of paid leave users in the country are men, one of the highest rates in the world (Anderson 2016). Potential solutions to this include making all maternity and paternity leaves fully paid and implementing equal pay for equal work. If a woman is earning as much as her male partner, either could take leave with the same financial risks, thus making it more possible for the woman to go back to work.

In Rwanda, the Equality of Result Quota system was particularly effective in getting women into office. It resulted in a knock-on effect whereby, women in the women-only positions decided to use their knowledge and experience to run for regular seats, thereby providing opportunity for a new set of women to take up the women-only positions.

This created a short-term paradox whereby although women's participation and representation

increased, their ability to influence policy making decreased. Women's civil society organizations in Rwanda were the most effective in advocating for policy change; that is, since protecting women's rights and promoting women's involvement in the public sphere and governance were core components of RPF policy, the government did not step in to curtail the work of women's organizations as it did with human rights organizations.

However, when the women leaders of these organizations stepped into government positions, the loss of experienced leaders lessened the effectiveness of advocacy on hot button issues, like land use, as the 'new' civil society leaders did not have the know-how to manoeuvre behind the scenes. Some scholars also make the point that certain women's rights issues apply specifically to rural women (the poor population). Therefore, the primarily middle-class women's civil society organizations and their urban elite membership may not identify with their struggle and advocate for policies to help them, despite being more involved in the political arena.

Secondly, increased female participation in governance has brought about decreased cooperation between women in civil society and women in office to an extent. Albeit, this cooperation was vital in the creation and passage of the key legislation such as the Inheritance Law. In Rwanda, some women feel as if their colleagues who have been elected to office, or who joined the RPF political party are no longer engaging in activism on behalf of women's interests. Since 2001, female parliamentarians have voted for bills that have: a) destroyed the one remaining opposition party b) given the President and the RPF powerful tools to root out dissensions c) eliminated an autonomous civil society and d) reduced public space for criticism of the government, the RPF, or their policies.

According to some analysts, the RPF regime has used female-friendly policies to achieve its own ends. They designated women's representatives in Parliament and other branches of government as a way of ensuring that they have loyal RPF representatives who simply acquiesce to the plans and policies of a male-dominated leadership. Improved policies could therefore be aimed at getting experienced, knowledgeable women into key leadership positions in government where they have more influence, as opposed to just using them to fulfil a quota or make up the numbers. The long-term potential benefit of greater female participation in governance in Rwanda is the transformation of women's political subjectivity (the general perception of women's participation in politics and male-oriented bias) and Rwandan culture.

The Argentine case study offers several key findings. First, the 1991 national candidate quota law has proven incredibly successful in increasing the number of women in politics. Its demonstrative effect has spread throughout the government and civil society to include local legislative branches and labor unions. This success would not have been possible without the active organization and mobilization of women in grassroots organizations, which has further created a mandate effect among female legislators. While the increased presence of women in

parliament has effectively altered the policy agenda to include greater discussion of women's issues, obstacles such as negative stereotypes of 'quota women' and male party leaders' procedural control has impeded significant legislative process.

Sénégal's parity law shows that grassroots organizations can be effective in pushing women's agendas, but may struggle in their implementations. Some localities in Sénégal only elect one member of Parliament which ends up being men, but parity did not account for this situation. The proper implementation of parity on the local and national levels could take many years. The Senegalese official language of French has been a persistent obstacle for many its women in politics, but no specific training program is in place to address the issue. Less educated women can still complete their main political tasks. Marriage tend to dictate the lives of many Senegalese women including politics. More broadly, women and girls still have less access to education than men and boys. Overall, the Senegalese educational system is failing many of its citizens regardless of gender. Many Senegalese women lack basic technological training. Societal norms in accepting men as leaders, but not women, persist -- especially among political parties and religious groups. The Senegalese public has conflicting opinions on the parity law. La Loi sur La Nationalité has finally given women to right to provide automatic citizenship to their non-Senegalese husbands and children. When women assume high position cabinet position, such as prime minister, this may not necessarily translate to more women in government.

These experiences suggest several potential policy solutions. First, the implementation of national regulations for the number of women in party leadership positions could help ameliorate a major barrier to substantive female representation. Anecdotal and statistical evidence suggests that a greater number of female party leaders will facilitate the approval of women's rights bills. Second, the demonstrated influence of grassroots organizations should be utilized to the fullest extent. Specifically, these organizations should develop programs to educate and train women from diverse backgrounds. The experience in Sénégal has demonstrated that women from lower socio-economic backgrounds effectively increase the representation of their constituents. Diverse representation will further decrease the existing "mujeres de" ('quota women') stereotypes that stem from a perception of female parliamentarians as stand-ins for their influential male relatives. An investment in girls' secondary education could facilitate their paths toward political life. A revision of parity/ quota laws to reflect the political realities of countries could correct some gaps that favor men. Finally, providing the necessary political training not only for incoming women politicians but for those already office could attract and maintain a diverse flow of female candidate into the political process.

Conclusion:

Our case studies: France, Rwanda, Argentina, and Sénégal -- though each has its flaws, they have shown the importance of increasing female's political participation to both tackle issues specific to women and to solve broad range of societal problems. These cases illustrate that

countries' development is strongly tied to the advancement of its women. Whether in Latin America, Europe, or Africa, societal stereotypes and norms have prevented women from seeking leadership positions, namely in politics. The parity/ quota laws are slowly chipping away the long-standing walls of gender discrimination by paving a different way forward.

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