

Cross Party Group on Women

Looking at diverse and equal representation from an intersectional perspective

Sponsored by Siân Gwenllian MS

10 December 2021

Zoom, 15:30 – 16:50

Attendees:

Sian Gwenllian MS (Chair)
Natasha Ashgar MS
Sioned Williams MS
Farah Hussain, Queen Mary University of London (Speaker)
Mona Lena Krook, Rutgers University (Speaker)
Bessie Johnson, Bawso
Hade Turkmen, Chwarae Teg
Debbie Shaffer, FTWW
Jordan Brewer, Welsh Women’s Aid
Jen Ramsay, Office of Paul Davies MS
Nancy Lidubwi, Bawso
Alison Parken, Cardiff Business School
Rhian Connick, NFWI
Rhian Davies, Disability Wales
Ele Hicks, Diverse Cymru
Jane Fenton-May, Women in Europe (Wales)
Catherine Fookes, WEN Wales
Jessica Laimann, WEN Wales

Apologies:

Delyth Jewell MS
Sarah Murphy MS
Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Sarah Childs, University of London
Laura McAllister, Cardiff University
Jackie Jones, Women in Europe (Wales)
Jess Blair, ERS Cymru

<p>1</p>	<p>Welcomes, Apologies, Introduction – Chair</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone and advised that the purpose of the meeting was to consider intersecting discrimination and its role in women’s political representation.</p> <p>She advised that the Cooperation Agreement between Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru included a commitment to introduce gender quotas in law. This was a major achievement for the CPG but it was important to not lose sight of diversity and the role of intersecting forms of discrimination.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Introduction to intersectionality and a case study from the UK - Farah Hussain, PhD Researcher at Queen Mary University of London and Local Councillor</p> <p>Farah Hussain provided a brief history of the concept of intersectionality, covering its inception in the US and later application to the European context. The concept suggested that people who experience intersecting discrimination, such as Black</p>

	<p>women, face “traffic from all directions” because they stand at an intersection where they experienced discrimination on the basis of sex and on the basis of race. This was sometimes referred as <i>double jeopardy</i>. Intersecting discrimination often also takes specific forms – Black women did not simply experience discrimination as Black people plus discrimination as women, but also distinct discrimination as <i>Black women</i>.</p> <p>In the context of politics, it was sometimes possible to experience multiple advantages as well as double jeopardy. For example, in the context of gender and ethnic minority quotas, women from ethnic minority backgrounds could be prioritized for candidate selection because they “ticked two boxes at once”. In addition, the idea of <i>strategic intersectionality</i> suggested that people who experience intersecting discrimination could use their position to be better representatives because they better understood the challenges that different groups faced.</p> <p>Farah Hussain then proceeded to outline her case study on the experience of Muslim women in the Labour party. Muslim women had reported being stopped from standing as local councillors through discrimination from within their own communities in <i>biraderi</i> networks, but the Labour party had dropped the case. It was important to understand what conditions led to this happening, and the case study showed that context was key to understanding multiple group advantages/disadvantages.</p> <p>The speaker concluded that we make better policies if we look at intersectionality. If policies considered the intersectional impact and were beneficial for people who experienced multiple disadvantages, they were probably good for everyone.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>The intersectional impact of quotas - Mona Lena Krook, Professor of Political Science, Rutgers University</p> <p>Mona Lena Krook provided a brief overview of gender quotas across the world. More than 130 countries were using some form of gender quota today, with some interesting trends emerging on the types of quotas used in different regions of the world (legislative quota, reserved seats or voluntary party quotas). The largest increase in women’s representation could be seen on the American continent, where legislative quotas were prevalent.</p> <p>In addition to gender quotas, many countries were using quotas for ethnic, linguistic or national minorities, with some policies dating back as far as the 19th century. More recently, quotas for disabled people had been put in place in five or six countries and youth quotas in more than twenty. Interestingly, youth quotas were almost exclusively introduced in countries that already had gender quotas in place, suggesting that gender quotas could be a trailblazer for quotas for other characteristics.</p> <p>The intersectional impact of combined quota policies depended on the design of the quotas in question. Research by Melanie Hughes on gender and minority quotas</p>

	<p>showed that, on their own, gender quotas tended to benefit women from majority backgrounds and minority quotas tended to benefit men from minority backgrounds. These effects could also be observed in countries where the two quotas coexisted, unless they were designed to operate in concert/ at the same level (so called <i>tandem quotas</i>). Only tandem quotas significantly increased the odds of women from minority backgrounds being elected.</p> <p>However, evidence suggested that even tandem quotas can be used tactically to preserve the representation of dominant groups. Through putting forward many candidates that have multiple protected characteristics (e.g. only women from minority backgrounds), parties could use these candidates to fulfil different quotas simultaneously, thereby retaining a maximum number of seats for men from dominant groups. Emerging best practice to avoid this pitfall was the use of <i>embedded quotas</i>, e.g. quota policies that require gender parity across different characteristics. An embedded quota policy would require, for example, that in a 20% quota for disabled people, half of the candidates needed to be men and half women. This way, embedded quotas could be used to achieve better representation across the whole range of diversity.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Discussion and questions from attendees</p> <p>The Chair and attendees thanked the speakers for their insightful presentations.</p> <p>In response to a query from Natasha Ashgar MS, Farah Hussain advised that she did not think quotas would lead to discrimination against those who were elected through them. Her own experience of being elected through an All Women Shortlist was that “once you’re in, you’re in” and she had never faced discrimination or been held back on that basis.</p> <p>Alison Parken asked about evidence around the impact of legislative vs party quotas. Mona Lena Krook responded that legislative quotas tended to be more effective because they required all parties to nominate women. If only voluntary party quotas were in place, the effect depended on the size of the party and its success in the election.</p> <p>In response to a query on what alternative measured could be used if quotas for other protected characteristics were not legally feasible in Wales, the speakers suggested that legislation could require parties to have due regard and to publish more data on the diversity of their candidates.</p> <p>Sioned Williams MS asked about the impact of gender quotas on workplace policies such as childcare. Mona Lena Krook referred to Sarah Childs’ research on gender sensitive workplaces for parliamentarians.</p> <p>In response to a query on quota policies, Farah Hussain advised that it was important to look at the evidence and not reinvent the wheel – the evidence was there that they</p>

	<p>worked.</p> <p>Rhian Davies highlighted problems around self-identification with quotas for disabled people. She also noted that the Equality Act was asymmetric with regard to disability, referring to non-discrimination rather than equality, which could potentially make a difference compared to other protected characteristics when it came to quota legislation.</p>
5	<p>Update from the Women in Europe (Wales) Group</p> <p>An update would be circulated after the meeting.</p>
6	<p>AOB</p> <p>The CPG considered its meeting schedule for 2022 and discussed various subjects to progress in the new year. It was agreed that meetings should be held on a bimonthly basis and the areas covered should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green and caring recovery from pandemic • UN treaties and women's rights • The role of gender in constitutional reform • CEDAW and supporting women with no recourse to public funds (joint meeting with CPG on Violence against Women and Children) • Future inequalities in Wales / just transitions
7	<i>Close</i>