

THE STIFLED VOICES OF WOMEN IN ARMENIA: HOW GENDER QUOTAS WILL SAVE THE VICTIMS

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Abstract

This paper explores the critical role of gender quotas in addressing the systemic underrepresentation of women in Armenia's police force and political institutions, particularly in combating the widespread issue of domestic violence. Rooted in deeply entrenched patriarchal traditions, Armenian society has long marginalized women from leadership roles, resulting in ineffective legal protections and law enforcement responses to gender-based violence. By examining the impact of gender quotas in other countries, such as those in Latin America, Europe, and Africa, this paper demonstrates how increased female representation in law enforcement leads to higher reporting rates, improved police responsiveness, and greater institutional sensitivity to domestic violence cases.

Additionally, gender quotas in political offices have been shown to challenge cultural norms, promote women's rights legislation, and allocate resources toward combating gender-based violence. While critics argue that quotas may compromise meritocracy or face societal resistance, this paper counters these concerns by highlighting evidence that quotas create long-term shifts toward gender equality without undermining democratic integrity. Through legal analysis, comparative studies, and statistical evidence, this paper underscores the urgency for Armenia to implement stronger gender quotas, ultimately fostering a more equitable society where women are empowered, protected, and represented in decision-making processes.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Armenia is one of the oldest countries, with some of the richest backgrounds and deeply rooted traditions.¹ One of the most critical historical events in Armenia's recorded history is its declaration as the world's first Christian nation in 300 CE.² The country is also known for possessing one of the oldest national Christian Churches in the world.³ As a result, the religion of Christianity has played a significant role in the history and culture of Armenia. With the acceptance of Christianity as the nation's official religion,⁴ Armenia's society has subconsciously implemented ideologies and customs into their social lives that have drastically changed life in Armenia. However, this raises an issue in a rapidly changing world, particularly regarding women's rights.

Due to the traditionally held beliefs of a majority of Armenians, likely to be a result of Christian beliefs, men handle most of the "important" roles in government and social institutions.⁵ This leads to a disproportionate number of men being in charge of the laws and regulations for the Armenian people, with a lack of representation for women.⁶ Additionally, women in Armenia are at a constant risk of domestic violence, and over half of those

1. See *Armenia*, ENCYC. BRITANNICA, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Armenia> (last visited Oct. 22, 2024).

2. See *id.*

3. See *Armenian Apostolic Church*, ENCYC. BRITANNICA, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Armenian-Apostolic-Church> (last visited Nov. 13, 2024).

4. See *Armenia*, *supra* note 1 (stating that with the reign of Tiridates III, Christianity was adopted as the state religion).

5. See Int'l Lab.Org. [ILO], *Work and Family Relations in Armenia*, at 2 (Mar. 11, 2010), https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@europe/@ro-geneva/@sro-moscow/documents/publication/wcms_312640.pdf (stating that "[w]omen remain significantly underrepresented in leadership positions").

6. *Id.*

who face it do not expect to be helped.⁷ With the underrepresentation of women in important roles in Armenian society, victims do not feel comfortable speaking up about the problems and trauma that they may face.⁸ As a result, domestic violence has become normalized due to the constant exposure and lack of resolution. With its laws failing to protect women and the police force refusing to enforce the laws, Armenia needs to make changes as soon as possible.

Armenian people have also been a victim of various conflicts throughout its history and even experienced a genocide as recently as the year 1915.⁹ Over 900 years ago, Armenian people were a victim of an invasion by the Scythians.¹⁰ During the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia era, the Scythians invaded Armenia while Armenia was recovering from a previous conflict.¹¹ During this incursion, the Scythians subjected Armenian women to horrific acts of violence, leading to mass deaths and the capture of the victims.¹²

The ongoing persecution of Armenians, particularly women and children, has deeply impacted the nation's populace, leaving lasting emotional scars.¹³ Previous studies have shown that there was an increase in intramarital violence after a genocide occurs.¹⁴ Considering the recency of the atrocities committed, the wound is still fresh in the minds of Armenians. Continued aggression from neighbors in the region only adds to the growing unrest and conflicts that the Armenian people have faced throughout

7. See Human Rights Watch Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Review of Armenia to the United Nations (Sept. 21, 2022), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/09/21/armenia-submission-un-committee-elimination-discrimination-against-women> (stating that that “53.5 percent [of victims] said that help is not expected from anyone” (citing Stat. Comm., AM Partners Consulting Co. & Int’l Ctr. For Hum. Dev., *Survey Domestic Violence Against Women: Analytical Report 2021* (2021), https://armstat.am/file/article/gbv_report_eng.pdf [hereinafter *Survey Domestic Violence Against Women*])).

8. Varouj Vartanian, *A Hidden Epidemic: Domestic Violence in Armenia*, HETQ (Aug. 15, 2023), <https://hetq.am/en/article/159066>.

9. See *Armenia*, *supra* note 1; *Armenian Genocide*, ENCYC. BRITANNICA, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Armenian-Genocide> (last visited Oct. 27, 2024).

10. See 2 MICHAEL CHAMICH, *HISTORY OF ARMENIA: FROM B. C. 2247 TO THE YEAR OF CHRIST 1780, OR 1229 OF THE ARMENIAN ERA 234* (Johannes Advall trans., n.p., Bishop’s College Press by H. Townsend ed., 1827) [hereinafter *HISTORY OF ARMENIA*].

11. See *id.*

12. See *id.* at 234-35.

13. See Gregory Aftandilian, *The Impact of the Armenian Genocide on the Offspring of Ottoman Armenian Survivors*, 25 J. SOC’Y FOR ARMENIAN STUD. 201 (2016).

14. See Giulia La Mattina, *When All the Good Men Are Gone: Sex Ratio and Domestic Violence in Post-Genocide Rwanda* 18 (Bos. Univ. Inst. for Econ. Dev., Working Paper, 2012), <https://www.bu.edu/econ/files/2012/11/dp223.pdf>.

history.¹⁵ This has also likely increased the occurrence of domestic violence as men take their frustration out on women.¹⁶

Gender quotas in other countries have proved to have a positive impact on women's representation, including decreasing domestic violence.¹⁷ At least 127 countries worldwide have already implemented "some type of quota system in the government."¹⁸ Part II will address how gender quotas in Armenia will help increase sensitivity and, thus, effectiveness in the police force.

Additionally, women holding positions of power help change social norms, improve policies, bring awareness against social issues, and advocate for women's rights.¹⁹ Currently, Armenia implements a "1 in 4" ratio under the electoral code, where "every set of three candidates on a party's list would include at least one male and one female," but this representation is insufficient.²⁰

Part III will address the effects of implementing gender quotas in political offices and how it would change the cultural attitudes in Armenia. Finally, Part IV will address the prominent drawbacks and critiques of gender quotas. With studies showing a connection between a higher number of women in political and police offices and a decrease in domestic violence, Armenia must make changes quickly. Domestic violence against women remains an ongoing issue, so Armenia must implement higher gender quotas in its police force and political offices to improve the gaps in police enforcement, cultural attitudes, and lack of resources for victims.

15. UNICEF, *Children and Families Affected by Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*, UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/armenia/en/children-and-families-affected-nagorno-karabakh-conflict> (last visited Jan. 2, 2025).

16. See La Mattina, *supra* note 14, at 8 ("Genocide survivors could suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and become more prone to violence.").

17. See Lexi Hanks, *Impact of Legislative Gender Quotas on Gender Violence Legislation in Latin America* 6 (May 1, 2015) (Undergraduate Thesis, UVM College of Arts and Sciences College), <https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/castheses/20>.

18. See *Gender Quotas Database*, INT'L INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE [INT'L IDEA], <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas-database/countries> (last visited Nov. 9, 2023) (listing 138 countries with constitutional, electoral or political party quotas, and an average level of representation for women in those countries at 27%).

19. See Jaya Nayar, *Equal Representation? The Debate Over Gender Quotas, Part 1*, HARV. INT'L REV., Nov. 21, 2021, <https://hir.harvard.edu/equal-representation-the-debate-over-gender-quotas-part-1>.

20. See Harout Manougian, *Armenia's New Electoral Code: Part III*, EVN REP. (Aug. 8, 2018), <https://evnreport.com/politics/armenias-new-electoral-code-part-iii>.

II. HOW GENDER QUOTAS WILL INCREASE SENSITIVITY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN THE POLICE FORCE

This paper argues that the addition of gender quotas within the police force will help decrease domestic violence and also increase the sensitivity and effectiveness of police officers. Additionally, implementing gender quotas will lead to higher reporting rates by women, as well as improved management of domestic violence issues. Domestic violence is a prevalent issue in Armenia, and without support from the police force, victims will be caught in a vicious cycle. Armenia can draw from other countries where quotas have proven to be effective and follow their lead in taking the right step for women's safety and representation.

Police officers in Armenia tend not to provide support to women in Armenia who are victims of domestic violence.²¹ Instead, women are left alone to deal with these "family matters."²² As a result, most women who go through domestic violence often do not report the incident; only 5% of the women who experienced physical or sexual violence in 2021 said they reached out for help from the police.²³ Attackers do not fear punishment since they know no consequences will come to them.²⁴ This, in turn, enables a perpetuation of violence, which leads to a destructive cycle.

Women in Armenia continue to be victims of domestic violence. Research conducted on the occurrences of domestic violence for women in Armenia has returned with alarming results. The data of women surveyed found that when asked, 31.8% reported psychological abuse by their husbands/partners, 6.6% reported being victims of sexual abuse, and 14.8% reported being victims of physical abuse.²⁵ The study also surveyed women to identify the levels of severity of physical abuse reported.²⁶ The findings showed that 13.1% of women reported being "moderately" abused, which involved slapping, throwing objects, pulling hair, and pushing.²⁷ In contrast,

21. See Human Rights Watch Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Review of Armenia to the United Nations, *supra* note 7.

22. See *id.*

23. See *id.* (citing Survey Domestic Violence Against Women, *supra* note 7, at 56).

24. See *id.*

25. See Susina Khachatryan, *Those Who Speak Up: Combating Domestic Violence*, EVN REP. (Jan. 11, 2023), <https://evnreport.com/raw-unfiltered/those-who-speak-up-combating-domestic-violence/>.

26. See *id.*

27. See *id.*

“severe” abuse, which involved beating, kicking, dragging, strangling, and use of a weapon, was reported at a rate of 5.5%.²⁸

Additionally, due to cultural norms and societal expectations, a sizable number of women in Armenia consider it to be their responsibility as a wife to engage in sexual intercourse with their husbands.²⁹ As a result, when asked about sexual abuse incidents with their husbands, women tend to provide conflicting responses.³⁰ This inconsistency is illustrated when comparing their confessions of the abuse with their affirmative stance on whether they believe it is their responsibility to fulfill their husbands’ needs in that regard. Regardless, the statistics showed that 62.5% of women reported being sexually abused by their husbands.³¹

In response to whether or not they have experienced bodily injury as a result of abuse from their husbands, 20.6% of women reported that they had received physical injuries.³² In comparison, 1% reported severe injuries that required medical attention.³³ The majority of respondents do nothing to protect themselves from their abuser.³⁴ Among Armenian women who were victims of domestic violence, 67% did not fight back,³⁵ and 43.3% stayed silent on the matter.³⁶ Domestic violence against women in Armenia must be addressed as soon as possible because it is a prominent issue.

The addition of gender quotas within the police force in Armenia will decrease domestic violence against women, as countries that implement such quotas often find that women feel more comfortable reporting domestic violence incidents and are much more likely to do so.³⁷ One report found that a more prominent female officer representation “lower[s] the subsequent rates of [domestic violence] per population [and] repeated [domestic violence incidents] per month...”³⁸ Considering that domestic violence is one of the

28. *See id.*

29. *See id.*

30. *See id.*

31. *See id.*

32. *See id.*

33. *See id.*

34. *See id.* (76.5% of women who have been physically or sexually abused by their partner continue living with them, seemingly not responding).

35. *See id.*

36. *See id.*

37. *See* Amalia R. Miller & Carmit Segal, *Do Female Officers Improve Law Enforcement Quality? Effects on Crime Reporting and Domestic Violence*, 86 REV. ECON. STUD. 2220, 2244-45 (2019).

38. *Id.*

most common types of violence against women worldwide, it is unacceptable for the female population not to be able to rely on their police.³⁹

The diverse perspectives that women bring to the police force challenge traditional power dynamics and contribute to a more holistic approach to handling domestic violence cases.⁴⁰ Rather than arguing that “female officers are equal substitutes for males,” advocates for women in the police force have argued that female police officers bring to the table what male officers have difficulty doing.⁴¹ For example, female police officers are more likely to respond effectively to victims of domestic violence.⁴² Advocates for women have argued that this is one of the distinct contributions females make to the police force.⁴³ This is significant because it emphasizes the importance of diversity in law enforcement. It is crucial to have a broad range of skills in the police force because the police deal with matters of safety and life and death. Women in domestic violence situations are likely to be scared, feel helpless, and experience psychological trauma.⁴⁴ Women might also feel like they have no one to turn to, so they think they cannot escape the situation.⁴⁵ They likely feel trapped and, as a result, might have suicidal thoughts.⁴⁶ This could put anyone in an extremely dark and dangerous state of mind and thus

39. See Ravina Raj, *Domestic Violence Against Women*, 4 INDIAN J. L & LEGAL RSCH. 1, at 1 (discussing domestic violence, most common type of violence conducted against women, as an ongoing female issue in India where “women are subjected to violence as a result of cultural norms and economic dependence”).

40. See Ivan Y. Sun, *Policing Domestic Violence: Does Officer Gender Matter?*, 35 J. CRIM. JUST. 581, 583 (2007) (“Female officers were significantly more likely than male officers to refer women to shelters and to show sympathy and understanding.”).

41. See Miller & Segal, *supra* note 37, at 2221 (citing Cara E. Rabe-Hemp, *Female Officers and the Ethic of Care: Does Officer Gender Impact Police Behaviors?*, 36 J. CRIM JUST. 426 (2008)).

42. See *id.* at 2221-44 (citing KIM LONSWAY ET AL., *HIRING & RETAINING MORE WOMEN: THE ADVANTAGED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES* 3 (2003), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/234761455_Hiring_Retaining_More_Women_The_Advantages_to_Law_Enforcement_Agencies (“[F]emale officers often respond more effectively to incidents of violence against women, a crime that represents approximately half of all violent crime calls to police.”)).

43. See *id.* at 2221 (citing Rabe-Hemp, *supra* note 41).

44. See e.g., Ana Gotter, *Battered Woman Syndrome*, HEALTHLINE (May 6, 2021), <https://www.healthline.com/health/battered-woman-syndrome#:~:text=Battered%20woman%20syndrome%20is%20considered,t%20get%20away%20from%20it.>

45. See *id.*

46. See *id.* (stating that because symptoms of anxiety and depression are also long and short-term effects of battered woman syndrome, it can be assumed that risk of suicide also increases).

must be dealt with carefully.⁴⁷ As previously mentioned, domestic violence is a common occurrence throughout the world.⁴⁸ Thus, it is not irrational to believe that females in the police force might have experienced it as well. Female officers who might have been in similar situations or know others in similar situations are likely to respond with the right amount of care.

Further, creating a gender-diverse environment in the police force will likely lead to a greater understanding of the needs of domestic violence victims, as well as an improved sensitivity when handling domestic violence incidents, leading to increased reporting rates. This will have incredible impacts if women feel heard, believed, and encouraged to come forward. A study conducted in 2010 showed that having a female leader “caused women to report more crimes [which were perpetuated] against [the women themselves].”⁴⁹ Data showed that women “living in a village with a female head are slightly more likely to approach the police.”⁵⁰ The study showed that there was an increase of 44% in reported crimes against women and a “related increase in the number of arrests for these crimes.”⁵¹ The study also indicated that women were “significantly more likely to say that the police solved their case” and that they were less likely to say that “the police refused to register their complaint.”⁵² Overall, the study indicated a “change in police attitude towards women when there is a female leader.”⁵³

Interestingly enough, the study also noticed no increase or decrease in other areas of crime.⁵⁴ A similar study also showed that there was no impact on the reporting rates of violent crimes against male victims.⁵⁵ There is likely an argument here that this confirms a direct correlation between crime reporting rates of violence against women and the presence of women in the police force.⁵⁶

47. See *id.* (stating references to help in case of emergency and how to tread with someone you might believe is in such relationship).

48. See Raj, *supra* note 39, at 1.

49. See Rohini Pande & Deanna Ford, *Background Paper: Gender Quotas and Female Leadership* to WORLD DEV. REP. 2012: GENDER EQUAL. AND DEV. 20, at 24 (2011), <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/9120>.

50. *Id.*

51. *Id.* at 20 (citing Lakshmi Iyer et al., *Political Representation and Crime: Evidence from India*, (Working Paper, Nov. 2010), https://www.isid.ac.in/~pu/conference/dec_10_conf/Papers/LakshmiIyer.pdf).

52. *Id.* at 24.

53. *Id.*

54. See *id.* at 20.

55. See Miller & Segal, *supra* note 37, at 2222.

56. See Pande & Ford, *supra* note 49, at 24 (“Having a female leader caused women to report more crimes against them.”).

Thus, it is clear that women are more likely to trust the police if they know the police represent them. This empathetic connection is crucial in fostering trust and encouraging survivors to seek help, breaking the cycle of silence that often surrounds domestic violence cases. As a result, implementing a gender quota could have significant implications, breaking the vicious cycle and creating a much more positive one.

Recently, Brazil has implemented women's police stations that intend to "assist all women who have been victims of domestic and family violence and crimes against sexual dignity."⁵⁷ These police stations will work "around the clock, including holidays and weekends," and will be carried out privately to ensure the victims' privacy.⁵⁸ Ensuring that help is available for victims of domestic violence at all times throughout the day and year will likely increase reporting rates in the area. It is also crucial to ensure the privacy of the victims, as it is common for domestic violence incidents to lead to life-or-death situations.⁵⁹ Furthermore, all of the female officers working at these specialized police stations are required to receive adequate training to "allow for the reception of victims in an effective and humanitarian manner."⁶⁰ This is a crucial component of the program because it signifies that the female officers responding to those incidents would likely be able to handle the situation with care. Lastly, these police stations must provide a telephone number or other electronic messenger for victims to immediately alert the police in case of an incident.⁶¹ This program was enacted in early April of 2023 and will provide "psychological and legal assistance to female victims of violence."⁶² Although it is too soon to examine the impacts of these specialized police stations on domestic violence against women in Brazil, it is likely to have a positive impact. These police stations will not only train female police officers to handle sensitive incidents, such as domestic violence cases, but also provide opportunities for females to participate in

57. See Eduardo Soares, *Brazil: New Law Creates Specialized Police Stations for Women*, L. LIBR. OF CONG. (Apr. 28, 2023), <https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2023-04-28/brazil-new-law-creates-specialized-police-stations-for-women/> (citing Decreto No. 14.541, de 3 de Abril de 2023, Diário Oficial da União [D.O.U.] de 4.04.2023 (Braz.) [hereinafter Decreto No. 14.541]).

58. *Id.* (citing Decreto No. 14.541, *supra* note 57).

59. See CDC, *About Intimate Partner Violence*, CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/intimate-partner-violence/about/index.html> (last visited Nov. 27, 2024) (discussing statistics that one in five homicide victims are killed by an intimate partner, and that over half of the female homicide victims are killed by a current or former male intimate partner, suggesting that domestic violence is likely to lead to life-or-death situations).

60. Soares, *supra* note 57 (citing Decreto No. 14.541, *supra* note 57).

61. *Id.* (citing Decreto No. 14.541, *supra* note 57).

62. See *id.* (citing Decreto No. 14.541, *supra* note 57).

leadership roles within the police force. This will also encourage women to seek help and allow them to gain trust in law enforcement.

III. GENDER QUOTAS IN THE POLITICAL ARENA AND ITS IMPACT ON TRANSFORMING CULTURAL ATTITUDES

This section addresses the cultural and societal barriers women face in Armenia, such as traditional gender roles, and a patriarchal society that is resistant to change. Additionally, harmful stereotypes about women are heavily prevalent in Armenia.⁶³ These barriers often lead to violence and prejudice against women.⁶⁴ Implementing gender quotas will allow for the normalization of women in power and politics. These quotas will break the stereotypes and prepare more women for a life in the political arena. With an increase in representation for women in politics, domestic violence will eventually decrease.

The Republic of Armenia has deeply ingrained traditional gender roles, in part due to its patriarchal society that is resistant to change.⁶⁵ Although seemingly innocent, these traditional stereotypes about women often cause harm.⁶⁶ Men often perceive “women defenders” as “challenging accepted socio-cultural norms,” and thus, they are at risk of “suffering certain types of violence and prejudice.”⁶⁷ This includes “threat of both physical [and] verbal attacks” from “anti-human rights extremist groups.”⁶⁸ Furthermore, Armenia is failing to fulfill its duty to provide a safe environment and adequate protection for human rights defenders, as required by the international treaties that Armenia has ratified.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, this goes ignored.

Implementing gender quotas is crucial to breaking these cultural attitudes towards women by normalizing women holding positions of power. It is the first step needed to guarantee the protection of women. These women can become role models for other women and introduce a more women-friendly legislation.⁷⁰ Furthermore, this would convey that women can and

63. See *Biannual Newsletter, January–June 2019* (Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women) 2019, at 1 [hereinafter *Violence Against Women Newsletter*].

64. See *id.* at 13.

65. Khanum Gevorgyan, *Born Ashamed: Overcoming Gender Stereotypes in Armenia*, HETQ (Mar. 23, 2019), <https://hetq.am/en/article/102075>.

66. See *Violence Against Women Newsletter*, *supra* note 63, at 13.

67. *Id.*

68. *Id.*

69. See *id.*

70. See Hanks, *supra* note 17 (“[A] larger quantity of women in a legislature would produce more women friendly legislation.”).

should participate in important legislative decisions. Women play an “important role in creating laws that protect themselves from gender violence.”⁷¹

Additionally, the higher the number of women found in the total legislation, there is a higher “likelihood of having full legal protections against gender violence.”⁷² This implies that women are more likely to tackle issues in the political arena that will help battle domestic violence. A law targeting domestic violence may go unnoticed or be ignored in a political stage in which men dominate. However, it is less likely to be brushed under the rug by a woman. This is because domestic violence laws indirectly and implicitly relate to the female population since women are more likely to suffer domestic violence, especially in a country like Armenia.⁷³

It is worthwhile to note that the South American countries have seen a tremendous change in women’s representation and rights after the implementation of gender quotas. Argentina, in particular, has seen a positive impact of implementing gender quotas in its politics.⁷⁴ Additionally, Argentina was the “first country in the world to have passed a Gender Quota Law for legislative elections in 1991.”⁷⁵ This was in line with “Argentina’s policy on the promotion of women’s political participation.”⁷⁶ Argentina has seen tremendous success because “gender parity applied to electoral lists is the policy that has produced the best results in increasing the ratio of female lawmakers elected to lower houses in Congress.”⁷⁷ As a result, Argentina, like most of the countries that have passed gender parity laws, has seen women’s representation “show a significant increase with unprecedented rates, most of which are over 40%.”⁷⁸ This figure is not marginal but rather substantial.

Furthermore, the implementation of these gender quotas in Latin America has shown a difference in the way society perceives women.

71. See *id.* (citing David L. Richards & Jillienne Haglund, *Violence Against Women and the Law* (Paradigm Publishers ed., 2015)).

72. See *id.* (citing Richards & Haglund, *supra* note 71).

73. See *Violence against Women Newsletter*, *supra* note 63, at 1.

74. See Tricia Gray, *Electoral Gender Quotas: Lessons from Argentina and Chile*, 22 BULL. LAT. AM. RSCH. 52, 61 (2003) (“The quota law has had a powerful positive impact on the number of women elected in the Argentine Chamber of Deputies.”).

75. Press Release No. 541/17, Ministry of Foreign Aff. Int’l Trade and Worship, Argentina Passes Law on Gender Parity in Political Representation (Nov. 24, 2017), <https://www.cancilleria.gob.ar/en/news/releases/argentina-passes-law-gender-parity-political-representation> (citing Law No. 24012, Nov. 6, 1991, [21174] B.O. 1 (Arg.)).

76. *Id.*

77. *Id.*

78. *Id.*

Opinion polls in Latin America have shown that “two-thirds of the population consider that quotas are, in general, beneficial to the region.”⁷⁹ In the same poll, 57% of people also agree that “[gender quotas] lead to the formation of better governments” because “women are more honest than men . . . and are better at making decisions.”⁸⁰ Implementing gender quotas in Latin America has also raised awareness of the problems entailed in women achieving political equality with men.⁸¹ Additionally, the majority of people have agreed that these issues should be addressed “in the short term” and how now the women’s question has come to be accepted as a part of the public agenda.⁸²

Egypt also implemented gender quotas early on but abandoned them quickly.⁸³ Egypt introduced a quota of 8% (equivalent to 30 women) in 1979, which yielded thirty-six women into its parliament.⁸⁴ Although they did not pass any laws or raise “a substantial number of political issues,” this was likely because they received “inadequate support and parliamentary training.”⁸⁵ After Egypt shortly abolished the female quota in 1986, it saw a significant decrease in women’s representation to 2.2% in the immediate cycle.⁸⁶ This established that the gender quota implemented was the right move and extremely necessary. Without it, it was almost impossible for women to have a voice or any representation within the political arena. More recently, Egypt’s new constitutional amendments of 2019 mandated a 25% women’s quota,⁸⁷ but also recognized their past mistakes in that implementing the quota alone is not enough. Egypt’s constitutional amendments of 2019 also added that for the quotas to be effective and allow meaningful participation, they must be “sustained effort over time.”⁸⁸ Thus, it is evident that gender quotas have had a significant impact on the political representation of women in South American countries as well as Egypt.

79. INTERNATIONAL IDEA ET AL., MUJERES EN EL PARLAMENTO. MAS ALLA DE LOS NUMEROS [Women in Parliament: Beyond the Numbers] 174 (Myriam Mendez-Motalvo & Julie Ballington eds., 2002).

80. *Id.*

81. *See id.*

82. *See id.* at 174-75.

83. *See* Jomana Qaddour, *Women’s Quotas: Making the Case for Codifying Syrian Women’s Political Participation*, 26 WM. & MARY J. RACE, GENDER & SOC. JUST. 557, 557-79 (2020).

84. *Id.* at 577 (first citing Law No. 21 of 1979 (Election Law), Apr. 1979 (Egypt); and then citing Gihan Abou-Zeid, *Introducing Quotas in Africa: Discourses in Egypt*, in *THE IMPLEMENTATION OF QUOTAS: AFRICAN EXPERIENCES* 46, 48 (Julie Ballington ed., 2004)).

85. *Id.* (citing Abou-Zeid, *supra* note 84, at 47-48).

86. *See id.* at 578 (citing Abou-Zeid, *supra* note 84, at 47).

87. *Id.* at 581.

88. *Id.* at 582.

Currently, the representation of women in the political arena in Armenia is incredibly low. Studies show that less than 2% of women in Armenia are represented as community heads, and only roughly 10% of women are represented in the local council as of 2019.⁸⁹ Furthermore, 24% of the National Assembly Members are women, 8% of Government Ministers are women, and 26% of the Deputy Ministers are female.⁹⁰ Currently, there are no female governors, and only 18% of the vice-governors are female.⁹¹ The numbers are staggeringly low, considering that out of the female population in Armenia, 56% of females have completed higher education.⁹²

There could be numerous reasons as to why this is so. First, females may feel pressured to stay out of the political arena. This is an incredibly difficult barrier whether they feel unqualified or lack confidence.⁹³ The male population likely plays a significant role in this aspect. The stereotypes typically seen in Armenia about the female population likely decrease women's confidence. It is also likely that the lack of female representation in political parties prevents women from participating.⁹⁴ As there is no representation, women do not feel heard and are less likely to have the courage to participate. However, a survey of politically "elected female[]" village leaders in West Bengal, India shows that after two years in their position, they feel as competent as their male counterparts in executing their duties."⁹⁵ It is clear that "women want to be leaders"⁹⁶ and that they are more than capable.

Many countries have found that there was an impact on domestic violence upon implementing more women in politics. One example of this occurred in Brazil, "where gender violence is widespread."⁹⁷ A study shows

89. See *Armenia: Women in Politics*, UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME [UNDP] (Dec. 2022), <http://web.archive.org/web/20230604125047/> (describing project regarding statistics about females and their political representation in Armenia).

90. *Id.*

91. *Id.*

92. *Id.*

93. *Id.*

94. *Id.*

95. Pande & Ford, *supra* note 49, at 4 (citing Lori Beaman et al., *Political Reservation and Substantive Representation: Evidence from Indian Village Councils*, in *India Policy Forum*, 2010–11 (Suman Bery et al. eds., 2010)).

96. *Id.* (alteration in original).

97. Magdalena Delaporte & Francisco J. Pino, *Female Political Representation and Violence Against Women: Evidence from Brazil 1* (IZA Inst. of Lab. Econ., Working Paper No. 15365, 2022), <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/263581/1/dp15365.pdf> (citing FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DE SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA, ANUÁRIO BRASILEIRO DE SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA [Brazilian Public Security Forum, Brazilian Public Security Yearbook] 6 (2018)).

that after a female mayor was elected in Brazilian municipalities, there was “a significant and sizeable reduction in domestic violence against women of relevant age (between [fifteen] and [forty-nine]) over the [four]-year term.”⁹⁸ This was around a 50% reduction in physical, sexual, and psychological violence against women.⁹⁹ The study further concluded that women holding positions of power have “increased attention to policies that might favor women welfare.”¹⁰⁰ A similar study found that the presence of a female mayor in Brazil “reduce[d] overall violence against women by between 6 and 11 incidents per 10,000 women.”¹⁰¹ This is estimated to be a decrease of 63%.¹⁰² Additionally, the study found that this effect is more prominent when more women are present in the city council.¹⁰³ The study compared the results to one conducted in Italy, which produced significantly similar results, showing that women are less likely to be voted out and more likely to implement policies that will tackle violence.¹⁰⁴

It is clear that there is a connection between the increase in women’s participation in politics and the decrease in domestic violence against women. There are several reasons as to why this is the case, but three particularly stand out. First, women in politics are more likely to advocate for women, especially regarding women’s rights and safety. Thus, women in politics are likely to advocate and enact policies that could address domestic violence. Second, women are more likely to use their positions of power to raise awareness about issues that are often left ignored, like domestic violence against women. Lastly, a woman who holds a position of power could influence decisions regarding the budgets and allocate resources toward programs addressing domestic violence. This is especially true in a country where domestic violence is an ongoing and prominent issue.

Additionally, women who live in the Republic of Armenia are at a massive disadvantage due to lack of resources to address their complaints.¹⁰⁵ With very few support groups available, it becomes difficult to seek help.¹⁰⁶

98. Alena Bochenkova et al., *Fighting Violence Against Women: The Role of Female Political Representation*, J. DEV. ECON., July 7, 2023, at 2.

99. *Id.*

100. *Id.*

101. Delaporte & Pino, *supra* note 97, at 2.

102. *Id.*

103. *Id.*

104. *Id.*

105. See *Armenia: Little Protection, Aid for Domestic Violence Survivors: New Law Should Enhance Safety, Services, Justice*, HUM. RTS. WATCH (Jan. 12, 2018), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/01/12/armenia-little-protection-aid-domestic-violence-survivors>.

106. See *id.*

With little to no medical, psychological, or legal services available, it becomes almost impossible to find help.¹⁰⁷ Armenia only has two domestic violence shelters, “each with a capacity for five women and their children.”¹⁰⁸ This is nowhere near enough. The “Council of Europe standards call for at least one . . . shelter in every region and one shelter per 10,000 people.”¹⁰⁹

With more women in the legislative system, it will be more likely that the law will represent them. A study found that there was a correlation between a low representation of women in “law-making processes” in Nigeria and a poor representation of women.¹¹⁰ Places like Africa, South Africa, Rwanda, and Ethiopia have found a positive correlation between appointing more women in politics and the representation of women.¹¹¹ Additionally, some courts have taken the implementation of gender quotas seriously and aim to enforce these quotas.¹¹²

One such case was raised in 2018 and decided in 2019, where three Slovenian nationals and two political parties challenged the rejection of a candidate list because there were more males than allowed, as per the gender quota.¹¹³ The electoral commissions rejected two separate lists of candidates that the coalition party submitted on May 3, 2018.¹¹⁴ These two lists included two Slovenian nationals who were candidates for the political parties involved in the case.¹¹⁵ The electoral commissions stated “that the lists had been drawn up contrary to section 43(6) of the National Assembly Election Act,” which essentially prohibited that no female candidates “represent less

107. *See id.*

108. *Id.*

109. *Id.*

110. *See* Zekeri Momoh & R. Nanji Umoh, *Electoral Quotas, Women Representation and Lawmaking Processes in Nigeria's Democracy (1999-2019)*, 11 COGITO MULTIDISCIPLINARY RSCH. J. 128, 139 (2019) (discussing how the lack of electoral quotas has a negative impact on women's representation in Nigeria).

111. *See id.* at 130, 139.

112. *See* Jurij Toplak, *The ECHR and Gender Quotas in Elections*, EJIL: TALK! BLOG EUR. J. INT'L L. (Dec. 19, 2019), <https://www.ejiltalk.org/the-echr-and-gender-quotas-in-elections/> (discussing an international case where a party's candidate list did not meet the 35% gender quota and so the electoral authorities “rejected the entire list of candidates, without giving either the candidate or the part[y] any possibility to remedy these [errors];” holding that it was crucial to reject the complete candidate lists to ensure “a more balanced participation of women and men in political decision-making,” and explaining that rejecting the list was done so in pursuit of the “legitimate aim of strengthening the legitimacy of democracy”); *see also* Zevnik v. Slovenia, App. No. 54893/18 (Nov. 16, 2018), <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-199209>.

113. *See* Zevnik v. Slovenia, App. No. 54893/18, paras. 1-4 (Nov. 16, 2018), <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-199209>.

114. *Id.* at para. 4.

115. *Id.* at paras. 1, 4.

than 35% of the total number of candidates on . . . [a candidate] list.”¹¹⁶ Neither list had the required 35% female candidates.¹¹⁷ One list had “six male and two female candidates,” whereas the other had “five male and two female candidates.”¹¹⁸

The Slovenian nationals and political parties argued that the lists should be accepted because both of the lists combined had the required 35% female representation.¹¹⁹ They also argued that the electoral commissions should have given them time to correct the list rather than just rejecting it immediately, seeing as no other European democracy immediately disqualified entire candidate lists for the aforementioned reasons.¹²⁰ However, both the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court rejected these arguments.¹²¹ The two courts upheld the decision of the electoral commission to reject the list because they stated that the rules had been clear and they should have known the punishment for not complying with them.¹²² Furthermore, the Court stated that the “advancement of the equality of the sexes is, today, a major goal in the member States of the Council of Europe.”¹²³ This means that although they recognized their decision to reject the candidate lists was strict, they went forward nevertheless because they believed meeting the gender requirements was just that important.

The Court further explained that the institutions in the member States of the Council of Europe consider the “lack of gender balance in politics to be a threat to the legitimacy of democracy and a violation of the right of gender equality.”¹²⁴ The Court highlighted how crucial it is to have adequate female representation in politics and, thus, why they used this justification when they decided to reject the candidate list.¹²⁵ By rejecting the candidate lists, the Court implied that without these gender quotas, it would be challenging to have equality. Additionally, the Court stated that they considered that the “interference in question pursued the legitimate aim of strengthening the legitimacy of democracy by ensuring a more balanced participation of

116. *Id.* at para. 4.

117. *Id.*

118. *Id.*

119. *Id.* at para. 5.

120. *Id.*

121. *See id.* at paras. 5-12.

122. *See id.*

123. *Id.* at paras. 22-24, 34 (referencing *SGP v. Netherlands*, App. No. 58369/10, para. 72 (Oct. 6, 2010), <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-112340>).

124. *Zevnik*, App. No. 54893/18, paras. 22-24, 34 (referencing *SGP*, App. No. 58369/10, para. 72).

125. *Id.*

women and men in political decision-making.”¹²⁶ The Court essentially stated that the purpose of the law is to correct the imbalance between male and female representation in politics.¹²⁷ Mandating a gender quota would promote a proportional involvement of both genders when making political decisions that affect all citizens.¹²⁸ Additionally, this could promote and even encourage the normalization of women in important decision-making roles.

In its decision, the Court compared and contrasted the facts of the case with another,¹²⁹ where the Court considered the reasons for noncompliance when it came to “accepting or rejecting lists of candidates.”¹³⁰ The Court stated that when balancing the “right to stand for election and ensuring observance of the gender quota,” they considered whether or not the “list had been composed diligently.”¹³¹ The Court also considered whether the “proposer has knowingly composed it in breach of the gender quota.”¹³² Thus, they took into account why the noncompliance happened in the first place. In *Zevnik v. Slovenia*, the Court ruled that the breach of the gender quota in the candidate lists occurred because the proposer of the lists “acted without due diligence.”¹³³

Furthermore, “[t]he proposer was the only one to blame for the breach of the gender ratio requirement.”¹³⁴ This is significant because it highlights how much the court wants to punish for purposely breaking the gender quotas. Adding sanctions in these situations would discourage gender inequality and would break social norms by normalizing the requirement of women in these roles. Furthermore, the fact that the applicants appealed multiple times, but the higher courts continued to affirm the electoral commissions’ decision proves the recognition of gender quotas throughout the different levels of the courts.¹³⁵

Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij v. Netherlands further evidences the importance of gender equality in Europe.¹³⁶ During this case, the Court

126. *Id.*

127. *Id.*

128. *See id.*

129. *See id.* at para. 36; *see generally* *Sarukhanyan v. Armenia*, App. No. 38978/03, (Aug. 27, 2008), <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-86482>.

130. *See Zevnik*, App. No. 54893/18, para. 36 (citing *Sarukhanyan*, App. No. 38978/03).

131. *See Zevnick*, App. No. 54893/18, para. 36.

132. *Id.*

133. *Id.*

134. *Id.*

135. *See id.* at para. 6.

136. *See Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij v. Netherlands*, App. No. 58369/10 (July 10, 2012), <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-112340>.

reiterated that because “advancement of the equality of the sexes is today a major goal in the member States of the Council of Europe[,] . . . very weighty reasons would have to be advanced before a difference of treatment on the ground of sex could be regarded as compatible.”¹³⁷ This means that the Court would only be willing to allow treating the genders differently under very narrow circumstances. The Court believed that these strict rules are necessary because they recognize that protecting women’s representation is of the utmost importance.¹³⁸ The Court further proved this by highlighting Article 7 in the applicant’s Statement of Principles, which states, “[a]ny measures aimed at acknowledging the equality of men and women are to be regarded positively.”¹³⁹

Additionally, Europe has made great legal strides to address gender equality in politics.¹⁴⁰ The Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly produced one such resolution that addresses the “impact of measures to improve women’s political representation.”¹⁴¹ The measure, which passed in 2016, states that “[e]lectorate quotas are the most effective means of achieving significant, rapid progress, provided that they are correctly designed and consistently implemented.”¹⁴² The Council of Europe recognizes that there need to be strict rules set upon first implementing the quotas because, without them, the quotas would not be effective. This is proved by the statement that “[q]uotas should be adapted to the electoral system in force, set ambitious targets, and be coupled with stringent sanctions for non-compliance.”¹⁴³

The document also recognizes that “[c]ultural factors determine women’s ability to participate in political life and in the economic and social development of a country.”¹⁴⁴ The Council of Europe recognizes that social norms play a huge role in shaping the representation of women and that this is a crucial step to making a change. Cultural factors tend to prohibit progression in the battle for women’s representation. For example, the common stereotype is “often related to a limited vision of women as mothers,

137. *Id.* at para. 72 (collecting cases).

138. *Id.*

139. *Id.* at para. 9.

140. See Toplak, *supra* note 112 (commenting on Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij, App. No. 58369/10, at paras. 72–73).

141. See Eur. Consult. Ass., *Assessing the Impact of Measures to Improve Women’s Political Representation*, 16th Sess., Resol. 2111 para. 15.2.4 (2016) (promoting measures to increase political representation).

142. *Id.* at para. 2.

143. *Id.*

144. *Id.* at para. 7.

with the role of homemaker.”¹⁴⁵ Thus, this must be addressed for gender quotas to be fully effective. The document recommends “[e]ducation and training” and states that they “are crucial, as they are a precondition for acquiring the necessary skills and for eradicating the stereotypes which still prevent the achievement of full and real parity.”¹⁴⁶ Armenia should follow these steps and start education and training early to break the stereotypes.

Finally, the document states that “[p]rovisions on political and civil rights for women in various constitutions are essential because they pave the way for gender equality and for equal citizenship and are the foundation for more specific action for equality.”¹⁴⁷ It has been proven that quotas are an effective way to promote gender equality; however, the quotas must be paired with additional “provisions”¹⁴⁸ in order to be as effective as possible.

Thus, there is a connection between resource allocation and a woman holding a position of power in the political arena. To conclude, more resources will be appointed for victims when more women are involved in these issues.

IV. EXAMINING THE DRAWBACKS OF GENDER QUOTAS: CHALLENGES AND CRITIQUES

Although gender quotas are generally seen as positive, there are those who think negatively of them. “Some argue that gender quotas could allow women in based purely on their gender and not on merit.”¹⁴⁹ Due to the general lack of opportunities available to women in these communities, there may be a lack of women with all the requirements needed. Implementing a gender quota could cause a police force or political office to feel pressured to meet their quotas. This would then prevent the police force or political office from choosing candidates whose qualifications may not be completely up to par. It would be unfair to candidates with the needed qualifications because it would take opportunities away from them. Furthermore, implementing a gender quota could lead to resentment among the co-workers in the police force or political office. This resentment could cause even more issues for women, especially if the workers believe there are more capable candidates whose spot was taken in order to meet a gender quota.¹⁵⁰

145. *Id.*

146. *Id.*

147. *Id.* at para. 10.

148. *Id.*

149. *See* Nayar, *supra* note 19.

150. *See id.*

Similarly, a critique has been made that implementing gender quotas in political office will, in fact, further gender discrimination.¹⁵¹ This argument states that by implementing gender quotas, the country is now favoring women over men when it should be a “society of equal citizenship that does not distinguish between its genders.”¹⁵²

However, these arguments can easily be refuted. First, women make up roughly half the population of the world. In order to have a society of equal citizenship, we need equal political representation of both genders. Generally, there has always been a large representation of males in politics.¹⁵³ As a result, women have been left behind.¹⁵⁴ Because the quota is “an affirmative action-type mechanism,” the quotas must provide preferential treatment to women for them to catch up.¹⁵⁵ The quotas must be “aimed at creating a balance in view of the inequalities women face in acceding to political posts” and must aim to “force their entry [into] positions of public authority” rather than relying on the goodwill of political parties or traditional selection processes.¹⁵⁶ Thus, it is essential to implement gender quotas to address the historical imbalances placed on women’s political representation.

Furthermore, it is entirely possible to implement a gender quota without compromising meritocracy. There are likely enough women candidates available in Armenia, especially with the implementation of the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program in Armenia’s capital, Yerevan.¹⁵⁷ This organization officially opened the Women in Policing Course in the nation’s capital in order to celebrate women in the police force and to emphasize the “importance of gender diversity as a vital component of police reform in Armenia.”¹⁵⁸ The International Criminal Investigative

151. See Kathleen A. King, Comment, *Representation of Women: Constitutional Legislative Quotas in Rwanda and Uganda*, 1 CHARLESTON L. REV. 217, 227 (2007).

152. Qaddour, *supra* note 83, at 558 (citing Irene Tinker, *Quotas for Women in Elected Legislatures: Do They Really Empower Women?*, 27 WOMEN’S STUD. INT’L F. 531, 533 (2004)).

153. See *id.* at 557–58 (“[T]he average level of representation in countries even with quotas still only hovers around 25.7 percent.” (citing *Gender Quotas Database*, INT’L INST. FOR DEMOCRACY & ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE (last visited Mar. 22, 2020))).

154. See *id.* at 557 (“In 2019, women represented a mere twenty-four percent in all houses of parliament worldwide.” (citing WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM, THE GLOBAL GENDER GAP REPORT vii (2018))).

155. INTERNATIONAL IDEA ET AL., *supra* note 79, at 1.

156. *Id.*

157. See *Armenia: ICITAP Supports Women in Policing in Partnership with U.S. Embassy*, CRIM. DIV. U.S. DEP’T OF JUST., <https://www.justice.gov/criminal/criminal-icitap/blog/armenia-icitap-supports-women-policing-partnership-us-embassy> (last updated Aug. 11, 2023) (noting that in 2021 at the opening of the ICITAP there were 37 police female officers).

158. *Id.*

Training Program (ICITAP) worked with the Ambassador of Armenia to officially open the program on November 8, 2021.¹⁵⁹ Additionally, they “welcomed three ICITAP senior police advisors (hailing from municipal police departments from the [United States])” to encourage more women to undergo the training.¹⁶⁰ The Women in Policing course will “address the challenges facing women as they enter traditionally male-dominated workplaces” and provide them with “collective methods for overcoming resistance.”¹⁶¹ Additionally, the program will introduce “personal strategies for maintaining physical and mental well-being in a highly stressful situation.”¹⁶²

The Women in Policing program is an incredible step in the right direction for women in Armenia who are interested in joining the police force. The program will allow for women to be trained and ready for the police force. This means that more and more fully qualified female candidates are coming out of the program. Thus, upon implementation of the gender quotas, there will likely be enough qualified candidates who are available for the police force to choose from. This will allow the police force to choose a female candidate based on merit rather than simply based on their gender.

While conducting my research, I was not able to identify similar programs offered to shape women into qualified candidates for political office. However, as previously mentioned, it is known that 56% of the female population in Armenia have higher education.¹⁶³ Although “[w]omen are important actors in education and social affairs and . . . [even] well-represented in academia,” their political presence remains lacking.¹⁶⁴ This shows that the female population in Armenia is smart, ready, and fully capable of holding positions of power. Furthermore, no specific educational path is required to get into politics. Considering that over half of the female population in Armenia has completed higher education, they are more than ready to pursue a career in politics.¹⁶⁵

Armenia can implement policies that promote the preparation of females entering the political arena. This has been seen before, with one such example

159. *Id.*

160. *Id.*

161. *Id.*

162. *Id.*

163. See UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, *supra* note 89 (stating that 56% of people with higher education in Armenia are women).

164. Beatrice Koreen Magbauna et. al., *Unraveling the Lingering Truths: Accounts of Women in Men-Dominated Societal Spaces*, 8 PSYCH. & EDUC. MULTIDISCIPLINARY J. 677, 677 (2023).

165. See UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, *supra* note 89.

happening in Europe.¹⁶⁶ As previously mentioned, Resolution 2011 states that “[a]ccompanying measures are also needed to help women overcome the hurdles they face in accessing and progressing in political life.”¹⁶⁷ Additionally, the resolution states that this includes “training and awareness-raising activities, media time reserved for women politicians, policies to help reconcile private life and political activities and, last but not least, legislation and other measures in favor [sic] of more balanced sharing of family responsibilities between women and men.”¹⁶⁸ The Council of Europe has long recognized that necessary steps must be taken in order to give the female population the boost it needs to step into the political arena.¹⁶⁹ Without this boost, it is increasingly difficult. This is why Armenia must implement similar steps to address any meritocracy issues it may encounter.

Furthermore, studies have shown that the implementation of gender quotas in politics does not create a public backlash, as previously suspected.¹⁷⁰ Instead, studies have shown that the public tends to react by “[updating] their beliefs about women.”¹⁷¹ Certain groups of people tend to respond strategically by deliberately mitigating the “impact[s] of gender quotas on leadership outcomes.”¹⁷² However, it is rational to believe that time and constant exposure to women in political or leadership positions will decrease the likelihood of this occurring.

Second, it is unlikely that implementing gender quotas will cause discrimination against males. On the contrary, the quotas will aim to foster a more inclusive and equitable society by mandating equal representation of both genders.¹⁷³ The emphasis on balanced representation ensures that the voices and perspectives of both men and women are adequately heard and considered in decision-making processes.¹⁷⁴ In other words, incorporating gender quotas will increase the chances of equal representation of both genders because the quota would also require equal male representation.

166. See generally Eur. Parl. Ass., Resol. 2111, *supra* note 141.

167. *Id.* at para. 3.

168. *Id.*

169. See Eur. Consult. Ass., *Assessing the Impact of Measures to Improve Women’s Political Representation Report*, Doc. 14011 (2016).

170. Pande & Ford, *supra* note 49, at 3.

171. *Id.*

172. *Id.* (“[T]he groups who are affected adversely – male incumbents, party leaders and firm owners – respond strategically in order to reduce the impact of gender quotas on leadership outcomes.”).

173. *Id.*

174. See *id.*

Evidently, courts care about equal representation for both genders, not just for the female population. First, most gender quotas that are implemented require quotas for both genders, not just the female representation. This is specifically to address any concerns of discrimination that can occur as a result of attempting to increase female representation. Furthermore, in one such case, a court disqualified a list of candidates that were predominantly female.¹⁷⁵ The applicant, who was a female, appealed to the Constitutional Court, arguing that because females are underrepresented in Slovenian politics, there “could be no legitimate aim in taking away the rights of those who propose many female candidates.”¹⁷⁶ She further argued that this went against the original aim of the Slovenian Parliamentary Elections Act, which was to increase female representation in politics. However, the Constitutional Court did not agree with her arguments. The three-judge panel dismissed the appeal as “inadmissible” and explained that the rules were clear for implementing a 35% gender quota for both genders.¹⁷⁷ Although the case is currently pending with the European Court of Human Rights,¹⁷⁸ the fact remains that the Constitutional Court believed it was important to uphold the gender quotas as a whole for both genders. This shows that although the original aim of implementing the Slovenian Parliamentary Elections Act was to increase the number of elected women, it was never intended for female representation to take over completely.¹⁷⁹ Rather, the ultimate goal was for an equal representation of both genders.

In summary, although some valid arguments can be made against implementing gender quotas in the police force and political office, the benefits heavily outweigh the detriments. It is not only necessary but crucial for the Republic of Armenia to implement gender quotas. It may be a challenge for Armenia to implement the gender quotas, given the likelihood of backlash. However, Armenia must balance its interest in keeping the citizens happy and its interest in the safety, protection, and well-being of half of its population. Given the options, it is likely that the protection of women heavily tips the scale.

175. See *Zevnik v. Slovenia*, App. No. 54893/18, para. 47 (Nov. 12, 2019), <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-199209>.

176. Toplak, *supra* note 112 (citing *Zevnik*, App. No. 54893/18, para. 7).

177. *Id.*; see also *Zevnik*, App. No. 54893/18.

178. *Id.*

179. See *id.* (citing *Zevnik*, App. No. 54893/18, para. 34).

V. CONCLUSION

As a nation lagging behind, the Republic of Armenia must move forward and implement higher gender quotas to protect domestic violence victims. The implementation of gender quotas has been seen in multiple countries, including Egypt and Latin America, and has yielded successful results. Embracing the successful models we have seen in these countries is a step in the right direction. Gender quotas are necessary in order to preserve the safety of women, as they have been proven to do so. Women in Armenia will see an improvement in the effectiveness of police, laws, and resources, and thus, indirectly, an improvement against domestic violence. In these modern times, women should not live their lives in fear of what violence their husbands will bring home with them. The implementation of higher gender quotas stands as a beacon of progress, fostering an environment where the safety and well-being of women are paramount.