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| Institution: Queen's University, Belfast | | |
| Unit of Assessment: 19 Politics and International Studies | | |
| Title of case study: Making a Major Contribution to Women's Electoral Representation on the island of Ireland | | |
| Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2003–2009 | | |
| Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit: | | |
| Name: Yvonne Galligan | Role (e.g. job title): Professor | Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2000-2018 |
| Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 onwards. Some of the impact derives from legislation introduced in 2012 which was shaped, in part, by Galligan's work. | | |
| Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No | | |
| <p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Galligan's research on women's political representation played an important role in the introduction of mandatory gender quotas in general elections in the Republic of Ireland. These helped lead to a doubling of the proportion of female <i>candidates</i> and a 48% rise in the proportion of women <i>elected representatives</i> in the 2016 Irish general election, and there were further increases at the 2020 general election. A rise in women's representation in the 2019 Irish local government election can also be attributed, in part, to the indirect impact of mandatory quotas. In addition, Galligan's research had a significant beneficial impact on the policies and practice of one major political party, Fianna Fáil, through the work of a commission on women's representation chaired by Galligan. Finally, Galligan's research also led to the establishment of a women's caucus at the Northern Ireland Assembly and, indirectly, to the setting up of a similar body in the Irish parliament.</p> | | |
| <p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Professor Galligan has published widely on the democratic problem of women's under-representation in Ireland. In research articles, public presentations and commissioned reports for political parties, she has developed a case for the use of gender quotas in political and public settings as a means of addressing the persistent gender deficit in public decision-making in the country.</p> <p>In the early 2000s, Galligan (with Kathleen Knight of Columbia University and Una Nic Giolla Choille of Trinity College, Dublin) played a leading role in a research study on women's underrepresentation in Irish politics. The research examined elected women representatives' experience of political life and the attitudes of women political elites in Ireland toward positive action initiatives that would assist in increasing women's legislative presence. This study, which was based on a survey of the views of both current and retired female elected representatives, was the first systematic research in Ireland conducted on female politicians' views on the measures needed to support women's political ambitions and careers. The survey found majority support among Irish female elected representatives (current and retired) for a legal requirement that Irish political parties should field a minimum percentage of women candidates [1].</p> <p>In [2], Galligan provided a comprehensive review of what she referred to as the "glacial" pace of progress in addressing the under-representation of women in Irish politics. This review, published in 2009, presented a wealth of data on women's under-</p> | | |

representation. Galligan concluded that political parties would need to take “strong affirmative action” measures in order to make any significant progress on the issue.

In [3], published in 2006, Galligan reviewed the relative effectiveness of the implementation of a range of gender quota options – both mandatory and voluntary. She concluded that, while voluntary quotas might appear to be more effective in some respects, they were vulnerable to the risk of abandonment.

She also highlighted the importance of female politicians joining forces, together with civil society representatives, to press for gender parity:

Coalition building to press for political parity has yielded particularly positive results — sensitising society to gender equality, creating a climate accepting of gender equality norms, and providing political women with an important source of leverage in pursuit of parity claims. The most effective and enduring strategies stem from a coalition of female politicians, women leaders and feminist activists [3].

3. References to the research

1. Kathleen Knight, Yvonne Galligan, & Una Nic Giolla Choille. 2004. "Equalizing Opportunities for Women in Electoral Politics in Ireland: The Views of Women Members of Parliament" in *Women and Politics*, Vol. 26 (1), pp.1–20. https://doi.org/10.1300/J014v26n01_01 This was published as the lead article in Volume 26. (Peer-reviewed journal, now renamed *Journal of Women, Politics and Policy*)
2. Yvonne Galligan. 2009. "Women in Politics" in John Coakley & Michael Gallagher (Eds.) *Politics in the Republic of Ireland*, Routledge, pp. 263–292. ISBN-13: 978-0415476720
3. Yvonne Galligan. 2006. "[Bringing Women In: Global Strategies for Gender Parity in Political representation](#)" in *University of Maryland Law Journal of Race, Religion, Gender and Class* Vol. 6, pp. 319–336.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The impact of Galligan’s research can be seen in a number of critical developments which have taken place since August 2013. Firstly, in the considerable and very significant impact of legislation on gender quotas which her work helped to shape. This was most evident in the 2016 Irish general election but the legislation’s beneficial impact could also be seen in the 2020 Irish general election. Secondly, in the impact of a commission chaired by Galligan on the policies and practice of a major political party. Thirdly, in the indirect impact of the legislation on government policy and representation of women in the Irish 2019 local government election and, finally, in the impact of Galligan’s research on the establishment of women’s caucuses in the Oireachtas (Irish Houses of Parliament) and in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Impact of gender quota legislation: 2016 general election

In 2012, the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act was passed by the Oireachtas. This Act provided for a gender quota of 30%, rising to 40% at a later date, a measure which was directly influenced by Galligan’s research [1] and [3] [A]. A major aspect of the impact of her research from August 2013 onwards, reported here, derives from the impact of the relevant section of that Act.

For this reason, it is necessary to briefly trace how that link arises, even though the Act itself was passed during the previous REF impact period. On 9th September 2009,

Galligan gave evidence to a joint Oireachtas committee which was investigating the issue of women's participation in politics [A]. In its report, the committee drew extensively on Galligan's oral submission, and on her published work [A]. Most notably, Galligan's submission and research helped shape the sub-committee's recommendation that provisions should be made for a 33.3% female candidate quota, potentially rising thereafter. This recommendation, slightly adapted, was adopted in Section 42 of the Act [A].

The first opportunity to put this legislation into practice arose with the 2016 General Election in Ireland. The legislation had considerable impact. There was a marked increase in both the proportion of candidates selected who were women and in the proportion of representatives who were actually elected. Overall, there was a doubling (100% increase) in the proportion of candidates who were women compared to the most recent 2011 General Election; 30% of the candidates who contested the election were women, compared to just 15% in 2011. The 2016 proportion was the highest ever percentage of female candidates for a general election in Ireland [B].

Moreover, the impact of these changes in the gender of the candidates helped to bring about a significant change in the gender mix of the Dáil (lower house and principal chamber of the Oireachtas). There was a 48% increase in the proportion of women elected compared to 2011, meaning 22% of TDs (Irish members of parliament) elected were women, the highest proportion of women deputies in the history of the Irish state. Indeed, analysing these results, Buckley et al. conclude:

Without doubt, gender quotas contributed to an increase in women's candidate selection and election in the 2016 general election. They helped create a cultural shift in political parties whereby women party members and their electoral ambitions were no longer overlooked [B].

A leading Irish women's organisation, the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCi) also publicly attributed the transformation to the introduction of gender quotas. Louise Glennon of the NWCi commented:

Gender quotas were necessary to accelerate the pace of change for women's equality, and it is clear that they were successful. Progress wasn't happening without quotas... [C]

Impact of Markievicz Commission on party policy and practice

Of the larger parties, Fianna Fáil oversaw the most spectacular transformation. No female Fianna Fáil candidates had been elected in 2011. However, in 2016, the party increased its proportion of women candidates by 111% and was successful in returning six female TDs. In order to help achieve this change, the party implemented a number of recommendations which were made by a special commission, the Markievicz Commission.

The Commission, which was chaired by Galligan and drew on Galligan's research and expertise, was tasked with examining how the party could ensure greater female participation in politics. The Commission's report was launched by the party's leader, Micheál Martin TD, in January 2015. He acknowledged the challenge which the report presented for the party:

... I am delighted with the work Professor Galligan and her colleagues on the Commission have carried out. It represents a constructive challenge to the entire party organisation which I am determined we will meet [D].

The Commission's report recommended a series of measures, including two which related specifically to the forthcoming 2016 general election campaign:

1. the party's National Constituencies Committee should direct constituencies to select a woman where necessary
2. the party should ensure that it met the 30% minimum quota of female candidates [E]

These recommendations were fully implemented; party headquarters issued directives to its members in five constituencies, and 31% of the candidates selected overall were women [F]. In total, Fianna Fáil implemented 14 of the report's 16 recommendations in full or in part; seven recommendations were implemented in full and seven further recommendations were implemented in part [F]. In addition, the Commission's report was discussed at the party's Ard Fheis (annual conference) and at all party branch meetings. The then President of the Fianna Fáil Women's Network has described the report as being "very significant" in enabling the party to adopt a major change in policy and practice [G].

Impact in 2019 local government election and 2020 general election: women's representation and government policy

The success of the quota measure in the 2016 general election led to a call by the NWCI for the government to introduce a similar mandatory quota for the local government election in 2019 [C]. Although this did not happen, in 2019, the Irish government introduced a funding scheme to incentivise political parties to field more women candidates in the 2019 local government election, including a specific measure to incentivise parties to field at least 30% female candidates. While not a legal requirement, this was in line with the 2012 legislation and, according to the government, the use of the 30% threshold was influenced by that legislation [H].

In that election, the proportion of female candidates rose significantly from 22% in the previous local government election in 2014 to 28% in 2019, while women as a proportion of elected candidates also rose, from 21% in 2014 to 24% [I].

The following year, there was another general election which was held on 8th February, 2020. In that election, all the major parties met or exceeded the mandatory 30% quota, helping to ensure that the highest ever number of female candidates was fielded [C]. There was also a further slight increase in the proportion of women elected, to 23% (from 22% in 2016) [J].

Impact in Dáil and Northern Ireland Assembly: women's caucuses

Galligan's work has also had a significant impact on the work of the Northern Ireland Assembly, although this was curtailed by the dissolution of the Assembly in January 2017. In March 2016, the Assembly launched a cross-party Assembly Women's Caucus [K]. The establishment of a Caucus was due, at least in part, to a submission from Galligan to a high-level Assembly committee which, drawing on her work in [3] and elsewhere, advocated the establishment of an Assembly Women's Caucus. The Committee's report endorsed this and other recommendations from Galligan, and this led to the setting up of the Caucus [L]. According to the then Chair of the Caucus, Galligan "played a key role in advising us on how to move forward" [L]. Moreover, the Caucus Chair subsequently recommended to the Speaker of the Dáil that the Oireachtas should establish a Women's Caucus and the Irish Women's Parliamentary Caucus was established in 2017 [K] [L].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- A. The committee's report was published as the Houses of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights [Second Report Women's Participation in Politics](#) October 2009. For full references and links to Galligan's oral evidence, the committee's report and the legislation, see impact evidence document 1.
- B. Buckley, Fiona; Galligan, Yvonne, and McGing, Clare 'Women and the Election: Assessing the Impact of Gender Quotas' in Gallagher, Michael and Marsh, Michael (eds.) (2016) *How Ireland Voted 2016*, Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 978-3-319-40889-7. The quoted extract is from p.201.
- C. See impact evidence document 2. This provides links and full references to three relevant articles in the *Irish Examiner*, published respectively on 8th March 2016, 6th January 2018, and 10th February 2020, extracts from which are cited in the case study text.
- D. '[FF Leader Launches Markievicz Commission Report to Boost Female Participation](#)', Fianna Fáil news release, 15.1.15.
- E. Fianna Fáil (2015) *Markievicz Commission Report. Gender Equality Document*, p.6. Copy can be supplied on request.
- F. See impact evidence document 3. This comprises a table listing recommendations and whether/how they were implemented, drawing on information supplied by the Equality Officer, Fianna Fáil. The Equality Officer has been involved in delivering the impact in terms of implementing the recommendations.
- G. Testimonial letter, dated 28th August 2019, from the first President of the Fianna Fáil women's network, appointed in 2015. Involved in delivery of impact.
- H. For further details, see impact evidence document 4. This provides an extract from an email dated 29.8.19 from the Irish Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, together with further information, supplied by that department, on measures taken by the Irish government to promote the participation of women in local government.
- I. See Table F in each of the following: Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government *Local Elections 2014 Results, Transfer of Votes and Statistics* and Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government *Local Elections 2019 Results, Transfer of Votes and Statistics*. Copies can be supplied on request.
- J. Michael Gallagher '[Irish election 8 February 2020](#)', Trinity College Dublin. See table under 'Female representation in the Dáil', specifically the percentage of seats won by women and the percentage change from the 2016 General election.
- K. See impact evidence document 5. This provides links to further information on the launch of the Northern Ireland Women's Caucus and on the Irish Women's Parliamentary Caucus.
- L. Testimonial, dated 30.7.19, from the then Chair of the Northern Ireland Assembly Women's Caucus (March 2016 – January 2017). She was also Principal Deputy Speaker in 2016 until the Assembly fell in 2017. She was, therefore, involved in delivering the impact.