2

Women, Afrodescendants, and Indigenous Peoples in Elected Office

In Latin America's history, women, Afrodescendants, and indigenous peoples were juridically excluded from full citizenship rights and politically disenfranchised (see, e.g., Andrews, 2004; Graham et al., 1990; Harris, 1964; Miller, 1991; Mörner, 1967; Wade, 1997). Over time, legal discrimination was reformed (at variable rates across countries and groups), but the patterns it forged remained. Inter-group differences in well-being today show a remarkable parallel to the *sistema de castas* created under the Spanish empire. Education, income levels, and experience of discrimination largely track skin color, with whites at the top and people with the darkest skin at the bottom (Telles, 2014b). Latin America's homosocial elite has anchored a status hierarchy privileging whiteness and maleness. Almost nowhere are women, Afrodescendants and indigenous people present in elected office in proportion to their overall numbers in the population. The political exclusion of disadvantaged groups reflects, and perpetuates, their subordinate social positions. Women, Afrodescendants, and indigenous peoples suffer lower wages; discrimination; a higher probability of being poor, unemployed, and living in inadequate conditions; and a greater likelihood of victimization and violence. These social and status inequalities are at odds with an inclusive, democratic society.

This chapter describes patterns of exclusion in Latin America by presenting data on the presence of women, Afrodescendants, and indigenous peoples in elected office. Women's numbers have grown in several countries, in some places dramatically, as a result of the introduction of gender quota laws. Indigenous peoples and Afrodescendants tend to be scarce in elected office, though their presence has risen in some countries. None of these excluded groups tend to cluster in their own party or set of parties. All tend to be elected from parties throughout the political spectrum. This chapter also describes the different mechanisms countries have adopted to promote inclusion, including candidate

20

quotas in parties and reserved parliamentary seats. Appendix 2 presents a list of inclusion mechanisms used worldwide.

Terminology

In general, I use the term "Afrodescendant" to refer to people not currently living in Africa, or born there, but with ancestors originating from the region. The term was not very common as recently as ten years ago. Many scholars referred instead to "Afro-Latins" or more specifically to "Afro-Colombians," "Afro-Brazilians," "Afro-Cubans," and the like, and also to "blacks" (see, e.g., Andrews, 2004; Sawyer, 2006; Telles, 2004; Wade, 1993). Scholarship published since 2010, however, has used the term "Afrodescendant" almost exclusively (see, e.g., Loveman, 2014; Telles, 2014b). This book uses the term "Afrodescendant" interchangeably with "black."

Contemporary use of the word "Afrodescendant" by scholars, international organizations, and development practitioners has its origins in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference against Racism in 2001. The Declaration referred to "peoples of African descent" as people neither born nor living in an African country, but who had ancestors from the region.[1] The term gained broad purchase for its use by the Inter-Agency Consultation on Race in Latin America (IAC), formed in 2000. Coordinated by the Inter-American Dialogue, the IAC was a network of development organizations with projects intended to combat social exclusion and racism suffered by Afrodescendants.[2] In their official documents, organizations such as the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank have similarly used the term "Afrodescendant" to refer to these groups (though the IADB's website uses the term "African descendants").

In the case of Brazil, I refer to people who declare their race/color on the census and other instruments as "pardo" or "preto" as black. In doing so, I conform to recent official discourse, as the government considers *pretos* and *pardos* to form the *população negra*, or the black population (Government of Brazil, 2010). This practice marks a change from the past, as historically, *pardo* was a category specifically intended to denote people who were neither *preto* (the word in the census to denote black) nor *branco* (white). In spite of the government's efforts to tell them otherwise, many people who declare themselves

---

[1] It also called specifically on countries of the Americas to recognize the existence of Afrodescendant populations, the racism they suffer, and historically entrenched inequalities in access to health care, education, and housing (United Nations, 2001).

[2] Member organizations of the IAC included the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the British Government's Department for International Development, the Pan-American Health Organization, the Ford Foundation, the Inter-American Foundation, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

as *pardo* do not consider themselves to be *negro* or Afrodescendant (Campos, 2013; Schwartzman, 2009; Feres Júnior, 2008). Though my terminology suggests that *pardo* → black → Afrodescendant, this is not always the case in lived reality.

Race and Ethnicity

It is important to clarify what I mean by race, ethnicity, and color. These terms do not have an *inherent* meaning. They have *historical* meanings shaped by the distinct ways that states, international organizations, and scientific and intellectual discourses have classified, categorized, and identified people. As Brubaker, Loveman, and Samatov point out, race, ethnicity, color, nation, and other categories are "not things in the world but ways of seeing the world" (Brubaker et al., 2004, p. 47). "Racial," "ethnic," or "national" groups do not exist independently of their identification, classification, and demarcation: they are created in and through such acts (Ibid.).

Racial and ethnic "ways of seeing" evolved differently in Latin America than in other areas of the world. Colonial powers in Africa and Asia, particularly the British, invented ethnic identities and then codified ethnic boundaries in laws and public policies (Anderson, 1991; Mamdani, 1996, 2001; Ranger, 1983; Vail, 1989). This does not imply that intergroup differences were absent prior to colonial rule. But they were not institutionalized and enforced by the power of the modern state, nor known as "ethnic." State practices of naming, labeling, and classifying, through the census as well as other instruments, formed part of a technology of rule. They made subject populations legible and facilitated the allocation of jobs and educational opportunities, while enabling official discrimination, reifying social divisions, and laying the groundwork for ethnic conflict and even genocidal violence (Horowitz, 1985; Mamdani, 2001; Montville, 1990; Scott, 1998). Official categorizations helped manufacture and maintain inequalities.

Though colonial Latin American states engaged in ethnic and racial classification, and used these categories to allocate rights and privileges, such practices were rejected and abandoned by Independent states (Cope, 1994; Graham et al., 1990; Mörner, 1967; Seed, 1982). Latin American countries forged models of the nation based not on racial or ethnic pluralism but on mixing and miscegenation. Ideologies of *mestizaje* (mixity), the *raza cosmica* (the cosmic race), and *blanqueamiento* (whitening), combined with administrative practices (such as the failure to count citizens by race and ethnicity, and the absence of segregation or official discrimination), upheld a different "way of seeing." Latin American societies were multihued, with different social classes and cultural practices. They were not multiethnic, in the sense of being composed of distinct descent-based groupings.[3] Yet stratification and inequality

---

[3] The growing popularity of ethnic idioms in the region, particularly after the 1990s, has shifted this panorama, but not for everyone.

based on color, language, culture, and other characteristics has persisted. The coexistence of flexibility on the one hand with racism and discrimination on the other marks Latin America's uniqueness in the study of comparative ethnic politics (cf. Wade, 1997).

Since the 1990s, many Latin American governments have introduced new policies to combat racism, inequality, exclusion, and discrimination, including the quotas and reservations studied in this book. The conceptualization and implementation of such policies depend on a good diagnosis of the problem, which requires social and economic data disaggregated by race and ethnicity. Such data were widely unavailable until very recently. Today, virtually every Latin American country attempts to enumerate its Afrodescendant and indigenous populations, permitting analysis of the racialization of social inequality. Yet as we see later in this chapter, different methods of classifying and counting groups yield dramatically different pictures of the racial and ethnic composition of the citizenry. What you choose to see determines what you get. And different people may see different things, even viewed through the same lens.

As there is no single underlying racial or ethnic reality to depict, but rather multiple dimensions, there is little point in hewing to precise terminology. To make my writing less tedious, I use the terms "race" and "color" interchangeably. Often, however, I use the term "ethnicity" for different purposes. As Wade points out, Latin America's racial identifications and categorizations historically were based on physical characteristics, whereas ethnic labels derived from perceptions of cultural differences, including language use (Wade, 1997). In practice, the groups denoted by such terms overlap (indigenous peoples, for example, are marked both racially and ethnically, as are some Afrodescendant groups). This overlap has only grown in the recent round of censuses, as questions about Afrodescendancy and indigeneity often use the same referents (ancestry, traditions, physical appearance, and so forth).

The ways Latin Americanists use the terms "race" and "ethnicity" differs from the practice in mainstream comparative politics. Dominant approaches define ethnicity and race as an attribute of individuals and groups that is based on descent (Chandra, 2004, 2006; Fearon, 2003; Horowitz, 1985). The descent-oriented nature of race and ethnicity implies that, though identities and groups can change, the extent of change is limited (sticky), at least in the short term (Chandra, 2006).

In Latin America, everyday practices of ethnic and racial identification and classification are usually not based on descent. Criteria for classification tend to revolve around perceived phenotype and perceived social status. As a result, siblings (of the same parents) can belong to different "races." And a person's ethnic or racial category can change as she or he acquires an education, earns more income, or changes neighborhoods (Graham et al., 1990; Harris, 1964; Telles, 2004, 2014b; Wade, 1997). In a nationally representative study of Peruvians conducted by the Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (PERLA), for example, only 61 percent of respondents who reported

that they had indigenous ancestry actually identified with the indigenous category (Sulmont & Callirgos, 2014). In Mexico, people jettison their indigenous identity by learning Spanish, wearing Western clothes, and moving out of indigenous communities (Martínez Casas et al., 2014).

Patterns of Exclusion in Latin America

Rigorous analysis of the political presence of excluded groups is thwarted by a lack of data. Though women are easy to count, Afrodescendants and indigenous peoples are not. Until 2014, when the Brazilian electoral court began to include a question about race/color when candidates declared their intention to run for office, no country had collected such information about elected officials and international organizations, such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank, did not gather it on a regular basis.[4]

Statistical data on race and ethnicity in all spheres have been historically scarce, especially for Afrodescendants. Though Brazil and Cuba had collected data on race/color for many decades, only in the 1990s did an additional country – Colombia – begin to collect data on Afrodescendancy. And that year – 1993 – the Colombian census dramatically undercounted numbers of blacks by asking a question about whether or not respondents were members of a "black community."[5] In the 2000s, a total of nine countries inquired about Afrodescendancy. By the 2010s, this number had grown to sixteen. Only Chile, the Dominican Republic, and El Salvador neglected to enumerate Afrodescendants in their national censuses in that decade (Del Popolo et al., 2009; Loveman, 2014). More countries historically collected data on indigeneity, and those that did not do so began to enumerate indigenous peoples in the 1990s and 2000s. By the 2010 round, every Latin American country except for the Dominican Republic asked questions intended to measure the size of the indigenous population (Loveman, 2014).

For both groups, criteria for counting differed across countries and over time within the same country. In the 2010 round, for example, ways of measuring Afrodescendancy or blackness varied. Questions or inquiries could be about race/color, culture, traditions, group membership, physical appearance, individual self-identity, or ancestry. Ways of naming blackness included Afrodescendant, *negro*, *pardo*, *moreno*, *mulato*, Afro-Colombian/Afro-Ecuadorian, and so on. Methods of enumerating the indigenous populations also differed: questions could refer to self-identification; membership

---

[4] Other countries have opted not to gather such data. When the Costa Rican electoral court considered including a space on registration cards for candidates to declare their race or ethnicity, the idea was immediately rejected on the grounds that it would be perceived as discriminatory (Conversation with Eugenía María Zamora, Vice President of Electoral Court, San José, Costa Rica, July 26, 2011).

[5] A mere 1.5 percent of the population claimed to identify as a member of a "black community," fewer than those who claimed an indigenous identity (Barbary & Urrea, 2004).

in a group, *pueblo*, or nationality; language use (and parents' language use); ancestry; culture; or traditions. Most censuses asked people to identify with specific indigenous ethnic groups and not the generic "indigenous" category (Del Popolo et al., 2009; Loveman, 2014, pp. 252–265).

Beginning in the 2000s, public opinion surveys offered another way of estimating the size of the Afrodescendant and indigenous populations. The Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), based at Vanderbilt University, includes questions on ethno-racial self-identification. In addition, PERLA administered nationally representative surveys in 2010 in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Peru that measured ethno-racial identity in distinct and innovative ways, including through the use of a skin color ranking scored by the interviewer (Telles, 2014b).[6]

Variation in counting criteria has produced different estimates of the size of indigenous and Afrodescendant groups. For example, the size of the Afrodescendant population in Colombia changed from 1.5 to some 11 percent between the 1993 and 2005 censuses owing to changes in the categories used to assess Afrodescendancy. The same happened in Costa Rica, where the group's size changed from 2 to 8 percent of the population between the 2000 and 2011 censuses (Telles, 2014a, p. 8). In Brazil, different methods of determining who is black produce dramatically different estimates of population size. In the PERLA survey, for example, the size of Afrodescendant group varied from 6 to 60 percent of the sample depending on classification criteria. Whereas only 6 percent of those surveyed self-identified as "negro" in response to an open-ended interviewer question, 55 percent self-identified as "preto" or "pardo," and some 60 percent were so categorized by the interviewer (Silva & Paixão, 2014, p. 191). A different Brazilian survey from 2002 employed six different methods of racial classification: depending on the method, the nonwhite group ranged from 11 to 59 percent of the sample (Bailey, Loveman, & Muniz, 2013).

Indigenous group size also fluctuates according to counting method. Consider the results of the PERLA survey administered in Peru. When asked to identify with the generic category of "indigenous," fewer than 5 percent of the sample responded affirmatively, but 35 percent of the sample reported having an indigenous parent and just under 40 percent reported having another indigenous ancestor (Sulmont & Callirgos, 2014, pp. 149–153). A similar pattern held for Mexico, according to the PERLA survey: 12 percent of the sample identified with the generic term "indigenous," 20 percent identified with a specific

---

[6] The skin color ranking was meant to capture the external dimensions of racial classification, since racism and discrimination often occur via the external, social classification of individuals, not their own self-identification. In addition, the color palette facilitated analysis of phenotypical variations within each racial and ethnic category (e.g., lighter versus darker mestizos). Telles and his collaborators found that skin color mapped more closely onto educational and income inequality than did ethnic and racial categories (Telles, 2014b).

TABLE 2.1. *Afrodescendant and Indigenous Populations in Latin America (numbers are rounded to the 1,000s)*

Countries	Total Population	Year	Afrodescendant Population	Percentage	Indigenous Population	Percentage
Argentina	40,117,000	2010	150,000	0.4	955,000	2.4
Bolivia	10,027,000	2012	24,000	0.2	2,790,000	40.6
Brazil	190,733,000	2010	97,083,000	50.9	897,000	0.5
Chile	16,636,000	2012	97,000	0.6	1,700,000	10.3
Colombia	42,954,000	2005	4,274,000	10.5	1,393,000	3.4
Costa Rica	4,302,000	2011	334,000	7.8	104,000	2.4
Cuba	11,163,000	2012	3,885,000	34.8	—	—
Dominican Republic	9,445,000	2010	8,980,000 (*indio*)	89.0	—	—
Ecuador	14,484,000	2010	1,043,000	7.2	1,014,000	7.0
El Salvador	5,744,000	2007	7,000	0.13	13,000	0.23
Guatemala	14,713,000	2011	5,000	0.0	4,428,000	30.0
Honduras	8,448,000	2011	59,000	1.0	428,000	7.0
Mexico	112,337,000	2010	2,366,000	2.2	11,133,000	9.9
Nicaragua	5,142,000	2005	23,000	0.4	444,000	8.6
Panama	3,454,000	2010	313,000	9.2	418,000	12.3
Paraguay	6,673,000	2012	234,000	3.5	116,000	1.7
Peru	27,412,000	2007	411,000	1.5	7,600,000	27.0
Uruguay	3,286,000	2011	255,000	7.8	159,000	4.8
Venezuela	27,228,000	2011	14,534,000 (*moreno*)	53.4	725,000	2.7
Totals	554,298,000		133,027,000	24.0	34,317,000	6.2

Source: Telles (2014a, pp. 26–27). His data are mostly from the latest round of national censuses, with the following exceptions: data on Chile (Afrodescendants), the Dominican Republic, and Mexico (Afrodescendants) come from LAPOP, and on Paraguay (Afrodescendants) from the Inter-American Development Bank.

ethnic category (Mayan, Mixtec, Zapotec, etc.) based on ancestors or customs, and 44 percent acknowledged having an indigenous ancestor (Martínez Casas et al., 2014, pp. 52–53). In the Mexican census, the indigenous group grew from 6 to 15 percent of the population between 2000 and 2010, which the PERLA scholars attribute to the inclusion of a reference to "culture" (Ibid.).

Table 2.1 contains the most recent available data (as of 2014), mostly from national censuses, on the percentage of the population that is Afrodescendant and indigenous in 19 countries.

Based on the census and other data, Telles and other PERLA scholars estimate that Afrodescendants make up some 20 to 25 percent of Latin America's total population. They offer a range, rather than a precise figure, owing to the difficulty enumerating the racial composition of the Dominican Republic and Venezuela. Table 2.1 categorizes people who self-identified as "*indio*" and "*moreno*" as Afrodescendant in the Dominican Republic, though the category likely includes people who are not. The same holds for the *pardo*

category in Brazil. (Telles, 2014a). At the same time, however, the practice of self-definition used by national censuses has tended to underestimate the size of the Afrodescendant population. As a result of negative social stigmas attached to both categories, many people who can pass prefer to identify as white (Ibid.).

As we see in this book, the difficulty of pinning consistent boundaries around Latin America's racial and ethnic groups poses a challenge not just for census counting but also for electoral engineers designing institutions to promote inclusion and representation. Most states cannot count and classify voters in consistent ways. And even those that can – such as Brazil and Cuba, where historically there has been more regularity in practices of self-definition and classification by others, may not want to. Many citizens object in principle to their segregation into distinct racial and ethnic categories by the state. And if the state cannot construct constituencies of minority voters, how can these voters select and hold accountable their designated representatives? Before addressing these questions, let us first examine trends in women's, Afrodescendants', and indigenous peoples' presence in power.

Women
Women's presence in power has grown significantly over time, with variations across countries and branches and levels of government.[7] As many existing works analyze women's representation in elected office (see, e.g., Hinojosa, 2012; Jones, 2009; Piscopo, 2010; Schwindt-Bayer, 2010), this treatment will highlight only major trends. Unlike Afrodescendants and indigenous peoples, women are easy to count. Data were available for all countries, though not for all levels of government.

Women's presence in national legislatures has increased significantly over time. Their share of seats in single or lower houses of parliament climbed steadily between 1990 and 2014: it averaged 9 percent in 1990, 13 percent in 2000, 21 percent in 2010, and 25 percent in 2014. Cross-national differences are important, as revealed in Table 2.2: in 2014, women's presence ranged from a high of around 40 percent in the Argentine and Nicaraguan lower houses and Costa Rica's unicameral parliament to a low of 9 percent in the Brazilian lower house and the Panamanian parliament. As we see later in this chapter, a great deal of this variation can be attributed to the presence or absence of a gender quota law.

Women's presence in cabinets has grown. In 2000, they made up 10 percent of ministers in South America and 16 percent of ministers in Mexico and Central America; in 2014, these figures had increased to 26 percent and 27 percent, respectively. These averages obscure large amounts of variation: women's share of cabinet seats ranged from highs of 44 percent in Nicaragua, 42 percent in Peru, 39 percent in Chile (under the second Bachelet administration), to

---

[7] This section draws from Htun and Piscopo (2010, 2014).

TABLE 2.2. *Women in Congress in Latin American Countries, 2014*

	Election Year	Lower House	Upper House
Argentina	2013	36.2	39.4
Bolivia	2009	25.4	47.2
Brazil	2010	8.6	16
Chile	2009	14.2	13.2
Colombia	2010	12.1	16
Costa Rica	2010	38.6	
Cuba	2013	48.9	
Dom. Republic	2010	20.8	9.4
Ecuador	2013	38.7	
El Salvador	2012	26.2	
Guatemala	2011	13.3	
Honduras	2009	19.5	
Mexico	2012	36.8	32.8
Nicaragua	2011	40.2	
Panama	2009	8.5	
Paraguay	2013	17.5	20
Peru	2011	21.5	
Uruguay	2009	12.1	12.9
Venezuela	2010	17	
Average		24.5	

Source: Htun and Piscopo (2014, p. 8).

lows of 8 percent in El Salvador, 13 percent in Uruguay, and 14 percent in the Dominican Republic (Figure 2.1).

Women are less present in executive office at the subnational level. Few women have been elected as governor in federal countries. Argentina elected its first women governors in 2007; Mexico and Brazil have elected only a handful of women governors since the mid-1980s. Women held an average of 9 percent of mayoral posts in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2010, an improvement over 1990 and 2000, when women made up some 5 percent of mayors (Htun, 2001; Htun & Piscopo, 2014).[8]

In general, women's numbers are lower in executive than in legislative offices. It is harder for women and other relative newcomers to win the majoritarian or plurality elections characterizing most executive contests. When only one seat is in dispute, parties tend to field the strongest candidates. Owing to their greater financial power, these are usually men. In addition, governor and mayor positions involve control of local tax resources and federal disbursements ("pork"), and can therefore be used to construct and maintain patronage

---

[8] Data on women's political participation at the local level are drawn from the 2010 Gender Equality Observatory, organized and published by the United Nations' Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
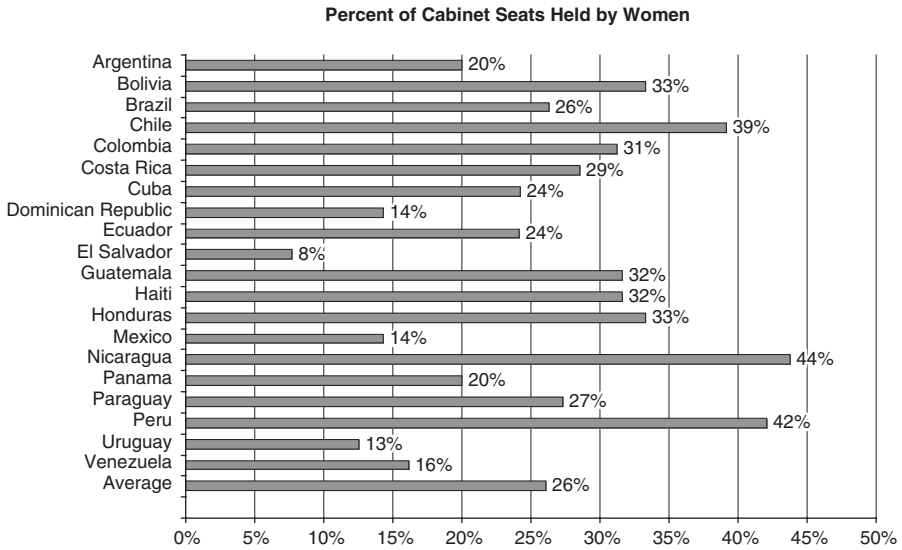
Percent of Cabinet Seats Held by Women

FIGURE 2.1. Women in cabinets in Latin American countries, 2014.
Source: Htun and Piscopo (2014), p. 4.

networks (Htun & Piscopo, 2010, p. 4). These networks confer power across
multiple areas of government. Franceschet and Piscopo (2013), for example,
link women legislators' exclusion from power networks in Argentina to the
fact that they are significantly less likely than men to have occupied "high
pork" positions such as governor and mayor.

Afrodescendant Representation in National Legislatures

Composing a picture of Afrodescendant presence in national elected office
required collecting original data. As mentioned earlier, only in 2014 did one
country – Brazil – begin to collect data on the race/ethnicity/color of candidates
(and by extension, elected officials) as a result of a directive from the Supreme
Electoral Court.[9] For this book, I focused on seven Latin American coun-
tries: Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.
Almost all of these countries have significant Afrodescendant population
presence, Afrodescendants in the national legislature, and civic organization
around black rights. I estimated numbers of Afrodescendants in national legis-
latures by classifying legislator photos available on congressional websites for
every country except Brazil.[10] This method has precedent: Brazilian scholars

[9] Resolution 23.405/2014, Tribunal Superior Eleitoral – TSE. Retrieved from www.seppir
.gov.br/noticias/ultimas_noticias/2014/04/tse-inclui-quesito-2018cor-ou-raca2019-
em-registros-de-candidaturas-ja-nas-eleicoes-de-2014 (accessed August 30, 2014).

[10] A small team of researchers from the University of New Mexico and Vanderbilt University
coded the photos separately. There was significant agreement on visible Afrodescendancy for

TABLE 2.3. *Afrodescendants in National Legislatures, 2014*

Country	Total Blacks	Black Women	Total No. of Legislators	Blacks as a% of Total
Brazil				
Chamber	103	n/d	513	20
Senate (2010)	1	0	81	1.2
Colombia				
House	9	0	166	5.4
Senate	1	0	102	1
Costa Rica				
Unicameral	0	0	57	0
Ecuador				
Unicameral	9	5	137	6.6
Peru				
Unicameral	3	3	130	2.3
Uruguay				
House	1	0	99	1
Senate	0	0	31	0
Venezuela				
Unicameral	4	1	165	2.4

Sources: Author's calculations; afrocolombianosvisibles (2014); Locatelli (2014).

at the Laboratory for Economic, Historical, Social, and Statistical Analysis of Race Relations (LAESER), in Rio de Janeiro, had also estimated the racial composition of the legislature by classifying photos on file with the TSE (Paixão & Carvano, 2008). Ideally, this strategy would be supplemented by two additional levels of measurement: (1) validation by the legislator in question that she or he identifies as Afrodescendant; and (2) intersubjective confirmation by legislative staff, political journalists, and others in the milieu that the legislator is "known as black." For the 2014 Colombian elections (but not previous legislatures), I relied on data from the "Afrocolombianos visibles" blog. Data are presented in Table 2.3.

These numbers are low in light of the Afrodescendant presence in society. The degree of Afrodescendant underrepresentation is pronounced in Brazil (51 percent of society, compared to some 20 percent of the lower house of Congress), Colombia (11 percent of society; 5 percent of the lower house), and

every country except Venezuela. This methodology was used by Paixão and Carvano's team at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro for the 2008–2009 report on Brazil's racial inequalities. The Brazil data in this chapter (for a more recent legislature than that studied by Paixão and Carvano) come from Universo Online's "Congresso em foco" and for the 2014 elections, from the Electoral Court's official data. I am grateful to Elvira Pichado Delacour, Margarita Corral, and Jason Morin for their assistance.

Costa Rica (8 percent of the population, no deputy). In Ecuador and Peru, by contrast, Afrodescendants were close to proportionally represented in 2014, and in Peru all three Afrodescendant legislators were women.

In Brazil, the parliamentary presence of Afrodescendants appeared to grow significantly after the Supreme Electoral Court began requiring candidates (and by extension elected officials) to declare their race/color. Official data suggest that *pretos* and *pardos* made up 20 percent of deputies elected to lower house of Congress in 2014 overall (see Table 2.3). Of the twenty-eight parties with some presence in the Chamber of Deputies, only five did not have any legislators assuming a black identity.[11]

In 2010, only 9 percent of the federal deputies were black (forty-four total) including seven women.[12] As this number was supplied by a different source with a different method, it is not strictly comparable to the 2014 data. In 2006, roughly the same number of black deputies were elected (forty-five), again using different counting methods, but with only three women (Paixão & Carvano, 2008, p. 148). In the 1990s, there were only about fifteen black deputies in the lower house of Congress (Johnson, 1998).

Black legislators were elected from parties across the political spectrum. As Table 2.4 shows, a variety of parties had elected deputies self-identifying as *pardo* and *preto*, including parties classified as Left (Partido dos Trabalhadores [PT], Partido Socialista Brasileiro [PSB], Partido Democrático Trabalhista [PDT]), those as the Center (Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira [PSDB], Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro [PMDB]), and those as the Right (Democratas [DEM], Partido Progressista [PP], Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro [PTB]) (Power & Zucco, 2012). (Not everyone agrees that Brazilian parties can be classified ideologically on the left–right spectrum, though skeptics agree that the Workers' Party (PT) can be considered left of the spectrum, with other major parties (PSDB, PMDB, DEM) farther to its right (Lucas & Samuels, 2010).) Blacks made up some one-quarter of deputies from the Workers' Party (PT), the largest and governing party. Several smaller parties had proportionally large numbers of Afrodescendant deputies: six of ten deputies from the Brazilian Communist Party (Partido Comunista do Brasil [PC do B]), for example, self-identified as *preto* or *pardo*.

In the United States, all forty-three black members of the House of Representatives were Democrats in 2014 (Manning, 2014). In Brazil, by contrast, deputies identifying as *pretos* and *pardos* did not cluster by party, ideology, or party type. In this respect, the 2014 elections conformed to past trends. After

---

[11] According to TSE data, none of the elected deputies declared themselves as *amarelo* or *indígena*. At least one deputy was of Japanese descent, however: Walter Ihoshi, of the PSD and from São Paulo, who declared himself *branca* to the TSE.

[12] For a count, see "Os deputados que se autodeclaram negros." Retrieved from http://congressoemfoco.uol.com.br/noticia.asp?cod_canal=21&cod_publicacao=36175 (accessed July 11, 2011). I added one person (Eliane Rolim – PT/RJ) to the list. As a *suplente*, she was not part of the original count.

TABLE 2.4. Pretos *and* Pardos *elected to Brazil's Chamber of Deputies, 2014*

Party	Pardos/Pretos	Total Deputies	% Pardo/Preto
PT	18	70	26
PMDB	7	66	11
PSDB	3	54	6
PSD	4	37	11
PP	5	36	14
PSB	10	34	30
PR	7	34	21
PTB	3	25	12
DEM	4	22	18
PRB	7	21	29
PDT	7	19	37
SD	6	15	40
PSC	4	12	33
PROS	3	11	27
PC do B	6	10	60
PPS	0	10	0
PV	3	8	38
PSOL	2	5	40
PHS	1	5	20
PTN	1	4	25
PMN	1	3	33
PRP	0	3	0
PTC	1	2	50
PEN	0	2	0
PSDC	0	2	0
PRTB	0	1	0
PSL	0	1	0
PT do B	0	1	0
Total	103	513	20

Please see list of acronyms following the Preface and Acknowledgments in this book.
Source: Supreme Electoral Tribunal (Brazil). Note these figures reflect candidates who were elected by party, and may differ from those who actually assumed seats due to leaves of absence, the assumption of power by *suplentes* (alternates), and the formation of multiparty blocks and coalitions.

the 2006 elections, some 45 percent of black deputies were elected from Leftist parties and some 55 percent from parties of the Center and Right (Paixão & Carvano, 2008, pp. 149–151).[13]

[13] Women may cluster by party or ideology more than men. After the 2010 elections, six of seven black women in the Chamber of Deputies were from parties of the Left: four were elected by the ruling Workers' Party (PT) and two by the Communist Party of Brazil (PC do B). Only one deputy – Andreia Zito of the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB) – came from a Center party. No black female deputies were elected from parties of the Right.

In Colombia, Afrodescendants made up a mere 5 percent of the Chamber of Deputies in 2014 (some 9 of 166, not counting the two deputies elected for the seats reserved for "black communities") and 1 percent of the Senate (1 of 102). There was only one woman among them.[14] As in Brazil, Afrodescendants in the Colombian Congress were affiliated with a broad range of political parties (including four from the Liberal Party, two from the "Partido de la U," and one each from the Movimiento Político 100% por Colombia, Movimiento de Integración Regional, Centro Democrático, and Movimiento Independiente de Renovación Absoluta). (For more details, see Chapter 5 on Colombia.)

Costa Rica did not have a single Afrodescendant man or woman in parliament in 2014, a significant break from past practice. From 1953 until his death in 1990, former president and chief political boss José Figueres used his power to guarantee the presence of at least one Afrodescendant member of the fifty-seven-person Congress. He made sure the National Liberation Party (PLN, the dominant party) put a black candidate in an electable position on a party list, usually in Limón province. In total, there have been seventeen black legislators elected via this route.[15]

In 2014, Ecuador was the only Latin American country where Afrodescendants were proportionally represented in parliament relative to their population size. That year, the country had approximately nine black legislators, almost 7 percent of parliament. According to the census, Afrodescendants made up 7 percent of the total population. Five of the nine legislators were women, and eight legislators came from President Rafael Correa's party (PAIS). In a pattern similar to Colombia's (more on this in Chapter 5), two of the male Ecuadorian representatives were famous soccer players. In the previous legislature (2009–2013), there were three Afrodescendant legislators, including one woman.

In Peru, three Afrodescendant women held seats in Congress in 2014; all were former volleyball players elected from different parties (Fuerza 2011, Perú Posible, and Gana Perú). Uruguay had one Afrodescendant male legislator elected from the Frente Amplio. Of Venezuela's four Afrodescendant legislators, three came from the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) and one from the Progressive Outpost (*Avanzada Progresista*).[16]

Across all seven countries, two trends are evident. First, Afrodescendants are underrepresented relative to their presence in the overall population, though over time data from Brazil and Ecuador, while not strictly comparable, suggest that their numbers in power are growing. Two, Afrodescendants do not cluster

---

[14] These data are based on a list from the Afrocolombianosvisibles blog (afrocolombianosvisibles, 2014).

[15] Interview with Walter Robinson, San José, Costa Rica, July 26, 2011. Robinson was the fourteenth deputy elected this way and Epsy Campbell the fifteenth.

[16] There was high variation among coders in estimates of the number of Afrodescendant legislators in Venezuela, from a low of three to a high of eleven.

by party. They tend to get elected from parties across the spectrum, including parties from the Right.

Indigenous Presence in National Legislatures

In some ways, measuring indigenous presence in national legislatures is even trickier than measuring Afrodescendant presence. In the past, scholars have estimated indigenous inclusion simply by counting the number of representatives elected by ethnic parties (see, e.g., Van Cott, 2005). Yet many so-called indigenous parties, such as the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) in Bolivia, the Alianza Social Indígena (ASI) in Colombia (now called the Alianza Social Independiente), and Pachakutik in Ecuador, have nonindigenous members and elected officials (and their numbers have grown over time). What is more, not all indigenous peoples are elected via these parties. In the Guatemalan election of 2011, only two of nineteen indigenous legislators were elected by an indigenous party. The other seventeen were from other parties, including nine elected from the right-wing party of President Otto Pérez Molina (Soberanis, 2011).

Classification of legislator photos is not a feasible option. Unlike Afrodescendancy, which tends to be visible, indigenous identity is difficult to ascertain from photos. Whether a person considers herself to be indigenous may change over time or from context to context depending on education, language acquisition, employment, residence, and political socialization. Historically, the distinction between indigenous and mestizo has been primarily cultural and flexible (Harris, 1964; Knight, 1990). What is more, as data from Bolivia show, many people identify *both* with one of the country's many indigenous communities (Quechua, Aymara, Guaraní, Chiquitano, etc.) *and* as mestizo (Zavaleta, 2008).

Table 2.5 presents data on indigenous presence in national legislatures for those countries for which data were available. The data come from nationally-specific secondary sources, personal correspondence with staff in field offices of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and from my own coding. Each source is identified in the table. In the event of contradictions between sources, I relied on the one with the most specific information (such as lists of names).[17]

Bolivia has the highest indigenous presence of the countries included in the table, reflecting recent growth, not an historic pattern. Figure 2.2 charts data compiled by Cárdenas (2011). In spite of the fact that recent census data indicate that people identifying with indigenous groups make up more than 60 percent of the population, indigenous peoples made up less than 10 percent of Congress until the 2000s. Numbers spiked in that decade, due largely to the emergence of the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (Movement toward Socialism, or MAS), led by Evo Morales (more on this in Chapter 4), and also the dramatic

---

[17] For example, three different sources gave different numbers for indigenous legislators in Peru. I relied on the report published by the National Electoral Court.

TABLE 2.5. *Indigenous Presence in Latin American Legislatures, circa 2013*

Country	No. of indigenous	Total Number	Indigenous as% of Total	No. of Indigenous Women
Bolivia				
Chamber	32	130	24.6	5
Senate	6	36	16.7	3
Brazil				
Chamber	0	514	0	0
Senate	0	80	0	0
Chile				
Chamber	0	120	0	0
Senate	0	38	0	0
Colombia (2014)				
Chamber	1	166	0.6	0
Senate	2	102	2	0
Ecuador				
Unicameral	7	137	5.1	5
Guatemala				
Unicameral	20	158	12.7	3
Mexico				
Chamber	14	500	2.8	3
Senate				
Peru				
Unicameral	1	130	0.8	0
Venezuela				
Unicameral	3	165	1.8	0

Sources: For Bolivia, Cárdenas (2011); for Brazil, Fernando (2011); for Chile, Jouannet (2011); for Colombia, Laurent (2012a); for Guatemala, Soberanis (2011); for Mexico, Cabrero, Pop, Morales, Chuji, and Mamani (2013); for Peru, Pinedo Bravo (2012); for Ecuador and Venezuela, author's coding.

growth in the number of voters (from around 3 million in 2005 to almost 5 million in 2009) (Cárdenas, 2011). Numbers of indigenous women were historically low, not exceeding one or two, until the 2005 elections (when they came to occupy four lower house seats) and especially the 2009 elections (when indigenous women came to hold five lower house seats and three Senate seats) (Cárdenas, 2011). As Chapter 4 discusses, the application of a gender parity law had a dramatic effect on women's numbers in the Senate. It was less effective in lower house races because of the tendency of political parties to place women in *alternate*, rather than *titular*, positions.

Indigenous presence in the Colombian Congress (1 of 166 in the lower house and 2 of 102 in the Senate) is largely the product of statutory legislative reservations, as Chapter 5 discusses. In the 1990s, however, several indigenous
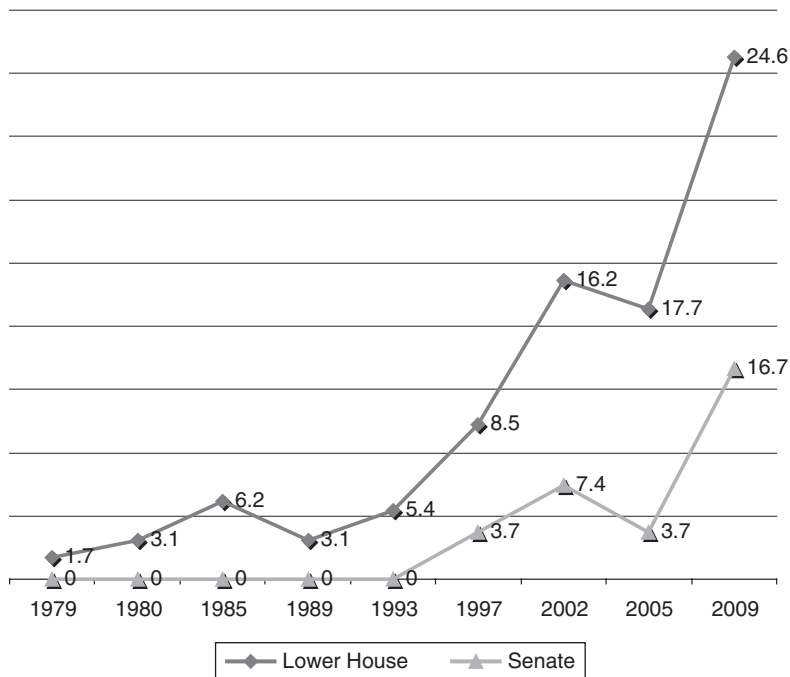
FIGURE 2.2. Indigenous presence in Bolivia's Congress (1979–2009).
Source: Author's presentation, based on data from Cárdenas (2011).

candidates successfully contested elections outside of the reserved seats, bringing their numbers to a high of four senators after 2002. After political reforms adopted in 2003, which privileged larger parties, indigenous strategies changed to focus on the reserved seats, though nonindigenous parties began contesting these as well. In the 2010 elections, indigenous parties captured both reserved Senate seats but a nonindigenous party won the reserved seat in the lower house.

Five of Ecuador's seven indigenous representatives are women. Four of the indigenous deputies were elected by Pachakutik, the principal indigenous party, and three were from the PAIS party of President Rafael Correa. Interestingly, Pachakutik also elected two nonindigenous deputies (Cabrero, personal correspondence, 2013).

In Guatemala, five different political parties elected indigenous deputies in the 2011 elections. The most (nine) came from the right-wing party of President Otto Pérez Molina; four deputies came from two other center-right parties; five from the UNE (center-left, Christian Democratic party), and two from the left-wing URNG-WINAQ alliance (Soberanis, 2011, p. 226). Of the six regions with majority indigenous populations, only a third (thirteen of thirty-six) of the deputies elected were indigenous (45 percent of candidates were indigenous)

(Ibid., pp. 224–225). Representation was greater at the local level: 110 of 333 mayors were Mayan (Ibid., p. 224).

Mexico's indigenous representatives came from nine different *pueblos* (and one identifies as *mestizo*) (Cabrero et al., 2013). Seven were elected from the PRI, five from the PRD, one from the PAN, and one from Citizens' Movement (*Movimiento Ciudadano*) (Ibid.). The low numbers (14 of 500, or 2.8 percent) are surprising in light of the fact that, for the 2006 and 2009 elections, twenty-eight electoral districts had been deliberately engineered to contain a minimum of 40 percent indigenous residents (more on this later).

Indigenous presence is low in Peru. Though indigenous people make up some 30 percent of the population, there was only one indigenous legislator elected to Congress for the 2011–2016 term (according to a publication of the National Electoral Court).[18] The previous congress (2006–2011) had two indigenous legislators, both highland women. An indigenous woman, Paulina Arpasi, was elected from Perú Posible in 2001. All four indigenous representatives won seats by receiving high numbers of preference votes that elevated them from lower positions on party lists (Pinedo Bravo, 2012). The fact that three of four indigenous representatives in the 2000s were women may be attributable to the country's gender quota law and thus reflect growth in women's inclusion, not the greater inclusion of indigenous peoples (Salmón, 2011, p. 287, citing Torres, 2008).

The congressional presence of people with indigenous ancestry is likely higher in Peru, but legislators may not identify publicly in that way. In the PERLA study, some 60 percent of people who reported having indigenous ancestry did not identify as indigenous (Sulmont & Callirgos, 2014). Identification in Peru is complicated by the fact that historically, state policy reclassified highland indigenous peoples as "peasant communities" (*comunidades campesinas*), a category that differentiated them legally from the numerically smaller "native communities" (*comunidades nativas*) occupying the Amazonian region. Only these latter groups were considered – by law, public policy, and society – to be indigenous (Smith, 1982). In spite of recent efforts to bring local categories into conformity with international norms, many communities in the coastal and highland regions believed to be indigenous do not regard themselves as such (Aragón, 2012; Pinedo Bravo, 2012; Salmón, 2011).[19]

Venezuela's indigenous representatives were elected in seats engineered for that purpose: three single-member districts encompassing different states (more on these below). After the 2010 elections, each of the three representatives came from a different indigenous organization, though most indigenous

[18] Other sources give different numbers: Villanueva Montalvo (2012) lists three indigenous representatives, while UNDP (2013) gives nine!

[19] Legislation adopted in the 2000s attempted to incorporate, though not without contradictions, international language on "indigenous or originary peoples" (Pinedo Bravo, 2012; Salmón, 2011).

organizations in Venezuela are allied with mainstream political parties, without whose support it would be impossible to win. Conflict between government and opposition shapes the competition for the reserved seats (Angosto Ferrández, 2011).

Mechanisms to Promote Inclusion in Latin America

Latin America has led the world in the adoption of gender quota laws, but lagged with respect to mechanisms to promote racial and ethnic inclusion. Beginning with Argentina's early adoption of a national gender quota in 1991, by 2014, fifteen countries had quota laws applied at the national and subnational levels (see Tables 2.6 and 2.7). Unlike policies to promote racial and ethnic inclusion, the *form* of gender quota laws varies little from country to country. All require that women comprise a certain percentage of the total number of candidates postulated by a party for legislative elections. As Piscopo puts it, "quotas ... restructure electoral lists and intervene in the 'inner life' of political parties, using state authority to make candidate recruitment and nomination more permeable to women" (Piscopo, 2013, p. 10).

There is more variation in the details of the quota laws, such as the percentage level of the quota. Most countries have reformed their gender quota laws over time to strengthen their requirements. Changes have included the raising of threshold percentages, the addition of oversight mechanisms, the extension of quotas to additional legislative chambers, and the introduction of placement mandates in closed-list systems (Jones, 2009; Piscopo, 2015).

Legislative quotas have spilled over into other areas of governance. As Piscopo reports, quotas are now applied in a variety of institutions, including both appointed and elected positions in the executive branch, the judiciary, and the boards of civil society organizations (see Table 2.8).

Fewer countries have introduced mechanisms to promote the inclusion of groups defined by race or ethnicity. In 2014, five countries applied them: Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela (see Table 1.1 in the Introduction).

Bolivia's reserved seats, analyzed in greater detail in Chapter 4, were introduced in the 2009 Constitution. Indigenous groups had initially demanded more (thirty-six) but the final text conceded only seven. The seats are elected from single member districts in which only certain groups recognized by the constitution can run but for which all residents of the district are eligible to vote. In the district created in Beni province, the single seat is designated to represent eighteen different indigenous groups; in the other six districts, the seat represents between one and six groups.[20] The La Paz district is intended to represent Afro-Bolivians as well as five other groups (in the 2009 elections, an Afro-Bolivian candidate won the seat).

---

[20] Gaceta Oficial de Bolivia. 2009. *Regimen Electoral Transitorio. Ley no.* 4021. Gaceta No. 0018, April 14, 2009. La Paz.

TABLE 2.6. *Gender Quota Laws in Latin America (National Level)*

Country	Quota Law	First Adopted	Major Reforms
Argentina	Both chambers, 30%	1991	1993, 2000 (placement mandates) 2000 (quota extended to Senate)
Bolivia	Both chambers, 50%	1997	2009/2010 (threshold raised from 30%)
Brazil	Lower chamber, 30%	1997	2000 (threshold raised from 25%) 2009 (closed loophole)
Colombia	Both chambers, 30%	1998	2000 (declared unconstitutional) 2011 (quota reinstated)
Costa Rica	Unicameral, 50%	1996	1999 (placement mandate) 2009 (threshold raised from 40%)
Dominican Republic	Lower chamber, 33%	1997	2000 (threshold raised from 25%) 2002 (Senate exempted from quota)
Ecuador	Unicameral, 50%	1997	2000 (threshold raised from 20% to 30%, placement mandate) 2008 (threshold raised to 50%) 2008/2009 (extended to senate)
El Salvador	Unicameral, 30%	2013	
Honduras	Unicameral, 40%	2000	2009 (threshold lowered to 30%) 2012 (threshold raised to 40%, increasing to 50% in 2016)
Mexico	Both chambers, 50%	1996	2008 (threshold raised from 30%) 2014 (threshold raised to 50%)
Nicaragua	Unicameral, 50%	2012	Applies beginning in 2016
Panama	Unicameral, 50%	1997	2012 (threshold raised from 30%)
Paraguay	Both chambers, 20%	1996	
Peru	Both chambers, 30%	1997	2000 (threshold raised from 25%)
Uruguay	Both chambers, 33%	2009	Applies to 2014 elections only

Source: Piscopo (2015).

TABLE 2.7. *Gender Quota Laws in Latin America (Subnational Level)*

Country	Quota Law	First Adopted	Reformed
Argentina	Varies by province		
Bolivia	Departmental, municipal, 50%	2009	2010
Brazil	Municipal, state, 30%	1995	1997, 2000
Colombia	Departmental, 30%	2011	
Costa Rica	Municipal, 50%	2009	
Dominican Republic	Municipal, 33%	1997	2000
Ecuador	Municipal, 50%	2000	2008, 2009
El Salvador	Municipal, 30%	2013	
Honduras	Regional, municipal, 30%	2009	
Nicaragua	Municipal, 50%	2012	
Mexico	State, 50%	2014	
Paraguay	Departmental, 20%	1996	
Peru	Regional, municipal, 30%	1998	
Uruguay	Departmental, 33%	2009	
Venezuela	Regional, municipal, 50%	2008	

Source: Piscopo (2015).

Colombia's seats (analyzed in Chapter 5) were introduced by the 1991 Constitution and different pieces of implementing legislation. Unlike Bolivia's seats, which are elected by geographically defined constituencies, Colombia's seats are elected nationwide. Indigenous and "black community" candidates appear on every ballot in the country. This practice conforms to the Senate's national district, but is at odds with the regular methods used to elect representatives to the lower house (where legislators are elected by province). Only indigenous candidates can run in the indigenous seats, but they may be postulated by both indigenous and nonindigenous parties meeting requirements established by the National Electoral Court. To field candidates for the "black community" seats, a group needs to be registered with the Interior Ministry.

In Mexico, the San Andrés accords stipulated that the indigenous population be taken into account in routine redistricting. For Mexico's 2006 and 2009 elections, twenty-eight electoral districts had been deliberately engineered to contain a minimum of 40 percent indigenous residents. Few indigenous politicians were elected, as political parties failed to run indigenous candidates in those districts and few organizations mobilized to demand effective implementation of the measure. For its part, the state offered no mechanism to gather data on whether the districts had succeeded in electing indigenous candidates (Villanueva Montalvo, 2012, pp. 55–56).

Since a 2002 reform established regional elections, Peruvian electoral law has required that 15 percent of candidates on party lists contesting subnational legislative elections (regional and municipal councils) in eleven of twenty-five regions be members of "native communities." As mentioned earlier, the term "native communities" refers only to members of indigenous groups in the

TABLE 2.8. *Quotas for Executive and Judicial Branches, and Civil Society*

Country	Quota Rule	Year Adopted	Juridical Status
Argentina	30% for trade union directorates	2003	Statutory
Bolivia	50% for all posts in the judiciary at all levels, including the Constitutional Court and the independent Electoral Tribunal 50% for all elected *and designated* government authorities and representatives at all levels (including the indigenous territories)	2009, 2010	Constitutional[a]
Colombia	30% for highest executive branch positions at all levels of government	2000	Statutory
Costa Rica	50% quota for one of the two vice presidency positions	1996	Statutory[a]
Costa Rica	50% for the boards of trade unions, charity organizations, and voluntary organizations	2011	Statutory
Dominican Republic	50% for mayors and deputy mayors	2000	Statutory[a]
Ecuador	50% in elected or appointed decision-making positions in all public offices, including the National Equality Councils 50% in the Electoral Tribunal, all branches of the judiciary, and the judicial civil service	2008	Constitutional[a]
Haiti	30% in all elected and appointed positions at the national level, including the civil service	2011	Constitutional[a]
Honduras	30% for mayors and deputy mayors	2000, 2004	Statutory[a]
Nicaragua	50% for mayors and deputy mayors	2012	Statutory[a]

[a] Included in the legislative quota law.
Source: Piscopo (2013).

Amazonian lowland regions, not to groups from the highlands. Peruvian quotas thus apply only to a small subset of the indigenous population. The quotas have been much criticized, first for undermining indigenous organizations and parties (as mainstream parties poach indigenous leaders to comply with the quota), and second, for not being part of a larger package of reforms to promote indigenous autonomy and self-governance (Aragón, 2012 citing Espinosa and Lastra 2011; Htun, 2004b).

Venezuela's seats date from the 1999 constitution establishing the Bolivarian Republic. The constitution guaranteed the three seats in the national assembly as well as indigenous participation in local and federal deliberative bodies in areas with indigenous presence (article 125, cited in Angosto Ferrández, 2011). Implementing legislation mandated that indigenous peoples occupy one seat in the legislatures of eight states (2005 Organic Law on Indigenous Peoples and Communities) and one seat in municipalities and "parroquias" with more than 300 or 180 indigenous residents, respectively (2009 Organic Law on Electoral Processes, cited in Angosto Ferrández, 2011). To contest any of these seats, a candidate must have exercised a position of traditional authority in her or his community; have a recognized history in the social struggle for the recognition of cultural identity; have engaged in behavior to benefit indigenous peoples; and be member of a legally recognized indigenous organization that is at least three years old (Ibid., p. 21). Between 2004 and 2010, a total of 171 organizations had contested seats (though 121 of these had contested a seat in one municipal election only), 23 different organizations had won at least one seat, 11 at either the national or regional level, and only one group (CONIVE) had won seats at all three levels.

Conclusion

Though gender quota laws have increased the political inclusion of women, reserved seats for Afrodescendants and indigenous peoples have had a more mixed effect. In some cases, such as Venezuela and Colombia (for indigenous peoples but not Afrodescendants), the application of reserved seats has improved minority presence in politics. In others, such as Bolivia, Mexico, and Peru, statutory inclusion mechanisms appear to be more epiphenomenal to other factors affecting political presence. In the case of Bolivia, the main factor increasing indigenous presence has been general electoral reform, the expansion of the electorate, and the rise of the MAS (Madrid, 2012). In Mexico, efforts to engineer a higher indigenous presence have failed because of party behavior, while in Peru the indigenous quotas apply to only a small minority of the indigenous population.

Numbers of Afrodescendants show little correlation with inclusionary mechanisms. Those countries with the highest levels of Afrodescendant presence (in terms of a percentage of all legislators) – Brazil and Ecuador – have not applied any mechanism to promote political inclusion. Yet countries with

low levels – Costa Rica, Uruguay, and Venezuela – do not have inclusionary mechanisms either. As we see later on, Afrodescendant presence in Colombia (the only country in the region with any affirmative action in politics for Afrodescendants) seems more related to black presence in mainstream parties and the high numerical presence of blacks in provinces such as Chocó and San Andrés and in cities such as Cali than to the "black community" reservations introduced by the 1991 Constitution.

What explains the adoption of gender quotas and their success in getting women elected? Have they produced any broader consequences on legislative behavior? Why were ethnic and racial quotas and reservations not more widely introduced? How have the policies worked? Have they improved the representation of interests of disadvantaged groups? The chapters to follow will explore these questions, beginning first with the story of why and how women from different political parties mobilized successfully around gender quotas.