



The female vote - gender differences in political behavior

Andreas Kotsadam

04 October 2013



EQUALITY • SOCIAL ORGANIZATION • PERFORMANCE

ESOP

Political participation

- ▶ Participatory inequalities may affect what policy issues are brought to the agenda, potentially reinforcing existing economic and social inequalities.
- ▶ Given that gender differences in participation could reproduce gender inequalities in other domains, participatory equality is important.

Celebration

- ▶ This year we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of suffrage for women in Norway!
- ▶ Citizenship went from being male to gender neutral.
- ▶ This gender neutral model of citizenship implies that women are accepted as persons capable of autonomous decisions.

Effects of suffrage in Norway

- ▶ First of all it made Norway a democracy!
- ▶ The consequences of this democratization are difficult to assess as it is hard to establish a valid counterfactual.
- ▶ In general, the effects depend on the gender differences in preferences and the use of the right to vote.

Outline

Gender gap in political preferences

Gender gap in voting

Effects of female franchise

Gender gap in representation

Effects of quotas

Gender gap in popular political participation

Explanations of the gap

Summary

Outline

Gender gap in political preferences

Gender gap in voting

Effects of female franchise

Gender gap in representation

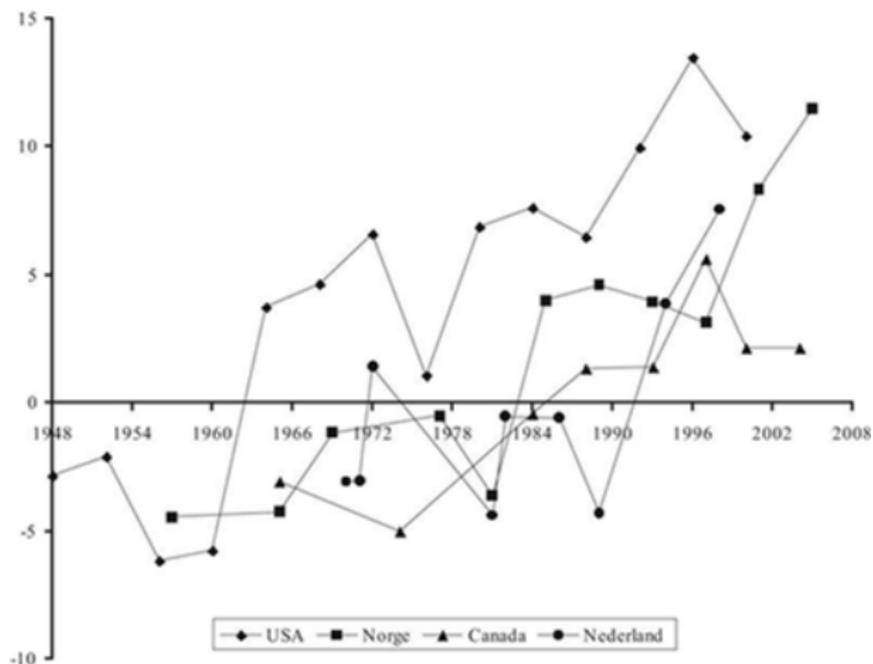
Effects of quotas

Gender gap in popular political participation

Explanations of the gap

Summary

Gender gap in left voting



Source: Bergh 2008.

What explains the change?

- ▶ A common explanation is that there has been a change in women's political values.
- ▶ $Y=Y?$
- ▶ Not really since focus is on postmaterial values and feminist attitudes, which differ across men and women.
- ▶ Bergh (2007) argues that about half of the gender gap in the US and Norway can be explained by this.
- ▶ Another important factor is claimed to be women's increased labor force participation (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2010).

The decline in marriage (1)

- ▶ Edlund and Pande (2002) argue that the decline in marriage in the US made women poorer relative to men and thereby contributed to the political gender gap.
- ▶ They find a strong positive correlation between increased divorce risk and the political gender gap, but only for middle-income voters.

The decline in marriage (2)

- ▶ They also find that marriage tends to make a woman more Republican, whereas divorce tends to make her more Democratic.
- ▶ Edlund et al. (2005) find support for the same mechanisms in 9 European countries and Iversen and Rosenbluth (2006) find the same in a wide sample of (rich) countries.

What about Norway

Left voting

Female	51	Male	44
Non-working female	46	Full-time working female	56
Unmarried female	55	Married female	48
Female with low risk of divorce	50	Female with high risk of divorce	56

Source: Finseraas et al. 2012.

Outline

Gender gap in political preferences

Gender gap in voting

Effects of female franchise

Gender gap in representation

Effects of quotas

Gender gap in popular political participation

Explanations of the gap

Summary

The evolution of rights

- ▶ Extending suffrage in already established nation-states took a long time and often came after basic economic rights (property, inheritance etc.).
- ▶ Equal treatment in the labor market and greater control over their own bodies ultimately followed.
- ▶ In contrast, in most developing countries, women gained formal political rights (often as part of the end of colonialism) before obtaining economic rights (Doepke et al. 2012).
- ▶ Many other rights are still missing.

Effects of suffrage in the US

- ▶ Different states introduced universal suffrage at different times and all were forced to do so in 1920.
- ▶ Lott and Kenny (1999) find that suffrage led to immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue.
- ▶ Miller (2008) finds that within a year of suffrage law enactment local public health spending rose by roughly 35%.
- ▶ This growth in public health spending reduced child mortality by 8-15% (or 20,000 annual child deaths).

In Europe

- ▶ Aidt and Dallal (2008) look at the effects of female suffrage in six Western European countries (including Norway) for the period 1869–1960.
- ▶ Social spending out of GDP increased by 0.6–1.2% in the short-run as a consequence of women's suffrage, while the long-run effect is three to eight times larger.
- ▶ In general, the size and scope of government seems to increase when women vote.

Outline

Gender gap in political preferences

Gender gap in voting

Effects of female franchise

Gender gap in representation

Effects of quotas

Gender gap in popular political participation

Explanations of the gap

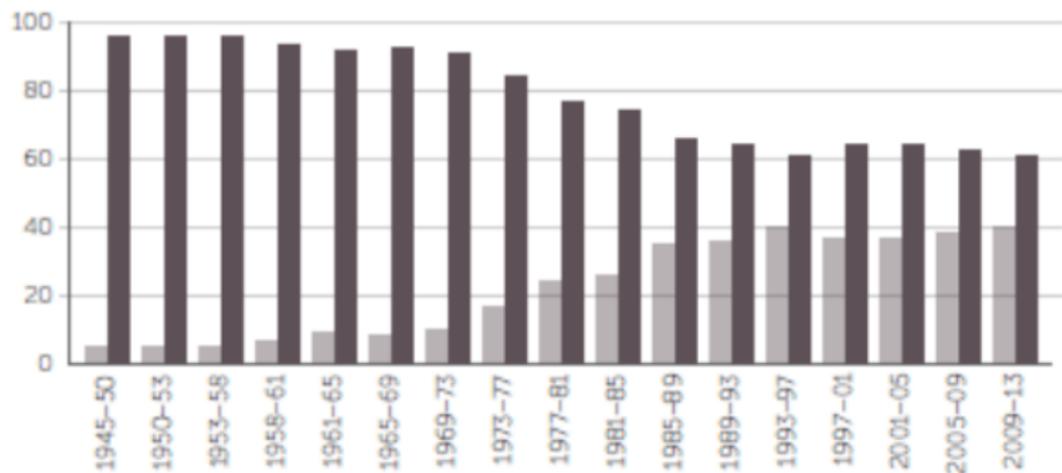
Summary

Gender gap in representation

- ▶ Women hold less than 20 percent of parliamentary seats globally (up from 10 percent in 1995).
- ▶ There are large differences across countries and Rwanda's parliament (the world leader) has 56 percent women.
- ▶ Affirmative action in more than 100 countries.

GENDER DISTRIBUTION IN NORWEGIAN PARLIAMENT

Gender of Norwegian Parliament representatives
by election period



Source: Women's suffrage centenary 2013.

Suggested reasons

- ▶ Lack of resources, including time constraints.
- ▶ Lack of professional networks.
- ▶ Direct norms, e.g. men are perceived to be better political leaders than women.

The effects of quotas

Should we expect quotas to change norms in women's favor?

- ▶ No, people may dislike quotas as voter choice becomes limited.
- ▶ No, as quotas may violate gender norms about what women should do.
- ▶ Yes, if it provides information to risk averse individuals.
- ▶ Yes, if it changes perceptions about what men and women should do.

Different empirical results

- ▶ Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004) use the randomized introduction of a gender quota at the local level in India, and find that policies on issues closer to the preferences of women were implemented more often in villages with female chiefs.
- ▶ Beaman et al. (2009), using the same setting, find changing gender norms following the quota.
- ▶ Kotsadam and Nerman (2012), however, find no effects of quotas beyond mere representation in Latin American parliaments.
- ▶ More research needed on different types of quotas, in different places, and at different levels of governance.

Outline

Gender gap in political preferences

Gender gap in voting

Effects of female franchise

Gender gap in representation

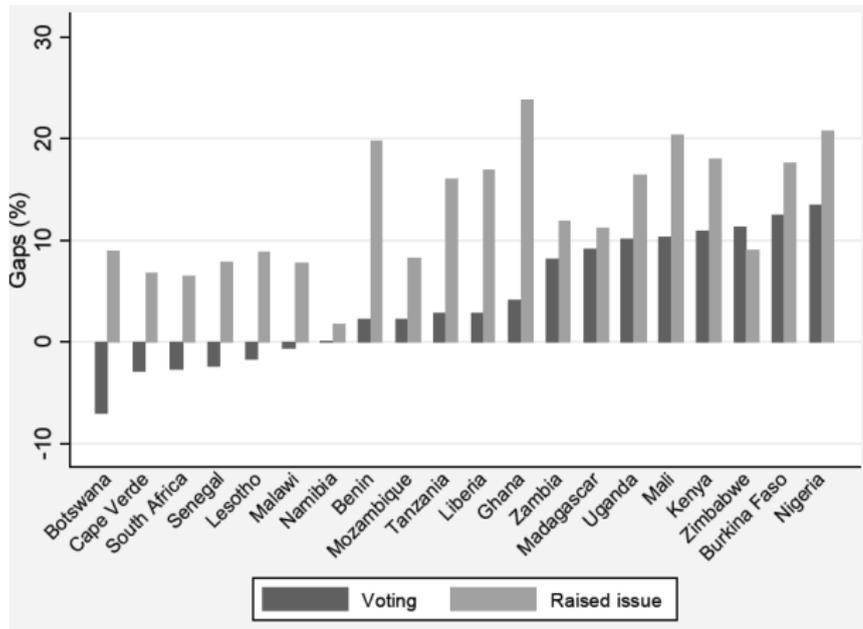
Effects of quotas

Gender gap in popular political participation

Explanations of the gap

Summary

Gender gaps in African countries



Source: Isaksson et al. 2013.

What explains the gaps?

- ▶ Leading explanations of the gender gap in participation in Western countries focus on structural differences in individual resource endowments.
- ▶ Often female employment is viewed as the crucial factor (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2008).
- ▶ Another perspective focuses on cultural differences, often with religion as main focus (Inglehart and Norris 2000).

Not in Africa

- ▶ We find little evidence for that these factors explain the gender gap in participation in Africa (Isaksson et al. 2013).
- ▶ Instead, a higher perceived prevalence of clientelism as well as political intimidation seem to be much more important factors.
- ▶ Theoretical reasearch on the gender gap in developing countries thereby lags behind.

Outline

Gender gap in political preferences

Gender gap in voting

Effects of female franchise

Gender gap in representation

Effects of quotas

Gender gap in popular political participation

Explanations of the gap

Summary

To sum up

- ▶ Female suffrage is a necessary condition for democracy and is intrinsically good.
- ▶ In addition it seems to increase the scope and size of government.
- ▶ Inequalities in political participation beyond voting are more persistent.
- ▶ The reasons for this persistence as well as their effects on other areas are less understood.

We should celebrate...

- ▶ ...but voting rights are only a part of political participation.
- ▶ Political rights are only a subset of important legal rights.
- ▶ Gender inequalities persist around the globe.
- ▶ The struggle continues!

References (1)

Aidt, T. S., & Dallal, B. (2008). Female voting power: the contribution of women's suffrage to the growth of social spending in Western Europe (1869–1960). Public Choice, 134(3-4), 391-417.

Beaman, L., Chattopadhyay, R., Duflo, E., Pande, R., & Topalova, P. (2009). Powerful women: does exposure reduce bias?. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 124(4), 1497-1540.

Bergh, J. (2008). Årsaker til kjønnsforskjeller i stemmegivning. Tidsskrift for samfunnsforskning (3).

Bergh, J. (2007). Explaining the Gender Gap: A Cross National Analysis of Gender Differences in Voting. Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties, 17(3), 235-261.

Chattopadhyay, R., & Duflo, E. (2004). Women as policy makers: Evidence from a randomized policy experiment in India. Econometrica, 72(5), 1409-1443.

UiO: **References (2)**

Doepke, M., Tertilt, M., & Voena, A. (2012). The Economics and Politics of Women's Rights. Economics, 4.

Edlund, L., L. Haider, and R. Pande. (2005). Unmarried parenthood and redistributive politics. Journal of the European Economic Association, 3(1), 95-119.

Edlund, L., & Pande, R. (2002). Why have women become left-wing? The political gender gap and the decline in marriage. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 117(3), 917-961.

Finseraas, H., Jakobsson, N., & Kotsadam, A. (2012). The Gender Gap in Political Preferences: An Empirical Test of a Political Economy Explanation. Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society, 19(2), 219-242.

Inglehart, R., & Norris, P. (2000). The developmental theory of the gender gap: Women's and men's voting behavior in global perspective. International Political Science Review, 21(4), 441-463.

References (3)

Iversen, T., & Rosenbluth, F. (2006). The Political Economy of Gender: Explaining Cross National Variation in the Gender Division of Labor and the Gender Voting Gap. American Journal of Political Science, 50(1), 1-19.

Iversen, T., & Rosenbluth, F. (2008). Work and power: The connection between female labor force participation and female political representation. Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci., 11, 479-495.

Iversen, T., & Rosenbluth, F. M. (2010). Women, work, and politics: The political economy of gender inequality. Yale University Press.

Isaksson A., A. Kotsadam, & M. Nerman (2013). The Gender Gap in African Political Participation: Testing Theories of Individual and Contextual Determinants. Forthcoming in Journal of Development Studies.

References (4)

Kotsadam, A., & Nerman, M. (2012). The Effects of Gender Quotas in Latin American National Elections. Mimeo Göteborg University.

Lott, J. (1999). How dramatically did women's suffrage change the size and scope of government?. Journal of Political Economy, 107(6 Part 1), 1163-1198.

Miller, G. (2008). Women's suffrage, political responsiveness, and child survival in American history. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 123(3), 1287-1327.

World Bank. (2011). World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development. World Bank Publications.

Women's suffrage centenary 2013.
<http://stemmerettsjubileet.no/in-english>