

GV101 Week 20: Women's Political Representation

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Office Hours (by appointment via the [Student Hub](#)):

Thursdays, 09:30 – 10:30, CBG.4.13

Thursdays, 14:30 – 15:30, CBG.4.13

Country Questions:

- In your adopted country, what is the proportion of women in parliament?
- What do you think are the main reasons why there are so few/many women represented in the parliament in your adopted country?
- What do you think is the best way to increase the proportion of women in politics in your adopted country?

Class Questions:

1. Tripp and Kang find that the presence of quotas is one of the strongest predictors of women's representation, and that voluntary party quotas are more effective than compulsory party quotas in this regard. What reasons are there for the latter finding?
 - a) Tripp and Kang also find that proportional electoral systems tend to elect more women than do majoritarian ones. Why is this?
 - b) Further, Tripp and Kang note a previously observed relationship between prevailing values in society and the percentage of women representatives. What implications might this have for the Norris and Inglehart paper critiquing the 'Clash of Civilisations' thesis from the week 2 further readings?
 - c) According to Tripp and Kang, whether a country is democratic is not a significant factor in women's representation, which may be because dictators use quotas to, amongst other reasons, obtain women's votes or create patronage networks. How can this observation be related to the Gandhi and Przeworski paper from week 3?
2. O'Brien finds that, amongst other things, female party leaders are more likely to emerge in parties that have unfavourable electoral trajectories. Why is this?
 - a) O'Brien notes 'that supply-side explanations cannot account for women's access to (and exclusion from) power.' What does this mean, more specifically?
 - b) According to O'Brien, green parties are more likely to have female leaders than mainstream parties (that are not significantly different from each other in this regard), whilst communist parties are less likely to have female leaders. How can this finding be related to the work of Inglehart and Norris from week 5?
 - c) O'Brien also finds that female party leaders are more likely than male leaders to be removed when their party performs badly, but more likely to be retained than male leaders when the party performs well. Why is this?
3. Besley, Folke, Persson, and Rickne find that 'gender quotas increase the competence of the political class in general, and among men in particular.' How does this relate to arguments about meritocracy?
 - a) How do Besley, Folke, Persson, and Rickne measure competence? Do you think this is a good measure of competence, and why?
 - b) How can Besley, Folke, Persson, and Rickne's findings be related to those of O'Brien in relation to the implications of competence for female leader longevity?

4. What do you think are the main reasons for the prevailing under-representation of women in legislatures? Why?
 - a) Based on the essential readings from this week, would you support the introduction of gender quotas where they are not already in place? If so, what kind?
 - b) Would you support the introduction of quotas for other under-represented groups? Why?

Additional Essential Reading Question:

5. Which of Pitkin's forms of representation, which we discussed briefly in week 12, do you think provides the strongest basis for introducing measures to equalise gender representation? Why?
 - a) Does the same form of representation also provide the strongest basis for equalising the representation of other under-represented groups? Why?

Further Reading Questions:

6. Lovenduski and Norris argue that measures of behaviour in parliament, and public self-reported indications of values, are unreliable indicators of the differences between representatives who are women and those who are men. Why is this? Do you find these arguments convincing?
 - a) Lovenduski and Norris prefer a strong, narrow definition of 'women's interests' rather than a broader definition based on all policy areas where women's and men's attitudes differ. Why is this? Do you agree?
 - b) Lovenduski and Norris find that representatives who are women differ from representatives who are men in terms of attitudes towards affirmative action and liberal gender equality. How can this be related to the articles by Tripp and Kang, and by O'Brien? And what about the work of Inglehart and Norris from week 5?
7. Dassonneville and McCallister find that greater descriptive representation of women in politics during formative years closes the gendered political knowledge gap later in life. Why is this?
 - a) What if descriptive representation is just a proxy measure of broader social equality? In other words, could it be the case that the dominant group bonus for men when their status is high disappears as equality increases? If so, is this problematic?
 - b) Surveys tend to ask factual questions to test knowledge of national politics? What might be the implications (for the gender knowledge gap) of asking about other forms of such as general political ideas, arguments, and the perspectives of others?

Essential Readings for Next Week:

- Daniel N. Posner, 'The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98, No. 4 (Dec., 2004), pp. 529-545.
- James Habyarimana, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel N. Posner, and Jeremy M. Weinstein, 'Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 101, No. 4 (Nov. 2007), pp. 709-725.

Further Reading for Next Week:

The further reading questions for next week will be based on the following two sources, which you may choose to focus on:

- Kanchan Chandra, 'What is Ethnic Identity and Does it Matter?', *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 9 (Jun., 2006), pp. 397-424.
- Karen E. Ferree, 'Explaining South Africa's Racial Census', *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (Nov., 2006), pp. 803-815.