

Gender and Political Representation

Session 7: Demand-Side Explanations

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Results from interim evaluation

The interim evaluation is based on 4 responses, so for the others, please complete the survey

- generally satisfaction with seminar
- a bit more mixed feelings about learning progress
- you like the interactive atmosphere but some of you would prefer more discussion in the plenary

What we did last week...

- conceptualized institutions
- established how institutions could mitigate gender-based discrimination (e.g. proportional electoral systems)

Implications

Question by Théa: What are the broader democratic implications if women politicians become less willing to seek media attention due to these costs?

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Question by Johanna and Julika: At what point do institutional incentives interact with informal norms and expectations to reproduce inequality? How can social norms be changed?

Plan for today

Today, we scrutinize whether the demand side, i.e., voters, systematically discriminate against women.

You have completed the study.

During the Implicit Association Test (IAT) you just completed:

Your responses suggested little or no automatic association between Female and Male with Career and Family.

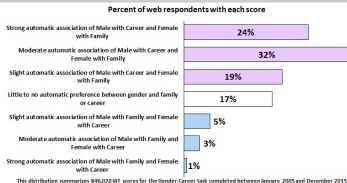


Figure: **Implicit Association Test** by Harvard University

Why focusing on the demand side may be important...

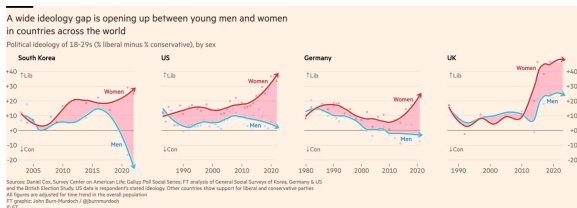


Figure: Gender gap in attitudes (Burn-Murdoch 2024)

Why's the growing gap in political attitudes between men and women an issue?

Why focusing on the demand side may be important...

If a gender gap in political attitudes is emerging, it might be that men discriminate against female politicians (and vice versa).

However, is that really the case? Is there a backlash against gender equality? What does Breyer (2024) contribute to that debate?

Backlash or Progressive Mobilization

Research question: How do trajectories of female representation in politics affect political outcomes?
What's the underlying theory by Breyer (2024)?

Backlash or Progressive Mobilization

Gender	Perceived trajectory	Expected reaction	Specific outcomes
Men	Change	Backlash (H1)	a) SSS ↓ b) Political centrality ↓ c) PtV radical right party ↑
	Stagnation	None (H2)	a) SSS → b) Political centrality → c) PtV radical right party →
Women	Change	Satisfaction (H3)	a) SSS ↑ b) Political centrality ↑ c) PtV progressive party?
	Stagnation	Discontent (H4)	a) SSS ↓ b) Political centrality ↓ c) PtV progressive party?

SSS: Subjective social status; PtV: Propensity to Vote. Arrows indicate the expected effects, the question mark symbolizes that no directed hypotheses were pre-registered.

Figure: Theoretical expectations by Breyer (2024, p. 8)

Backlash or Progressive Mobilization

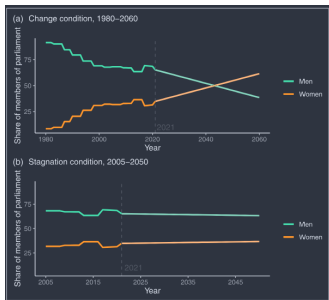


Figure: Research design by Breyer (2024, p. 11)

Outcome questions, such as “where do you think you and other people like you will be 30 years from now?”.

Any thoughts on the design?

Backlash or Progressive Mobilization

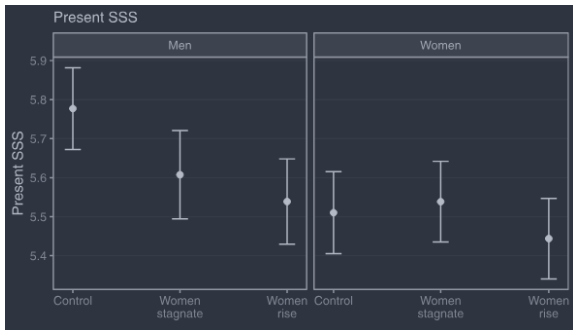


Figure: Effects of women's trajectories on present subjective social status (Breyer 2024)

Backlash or Progressive Mobilization

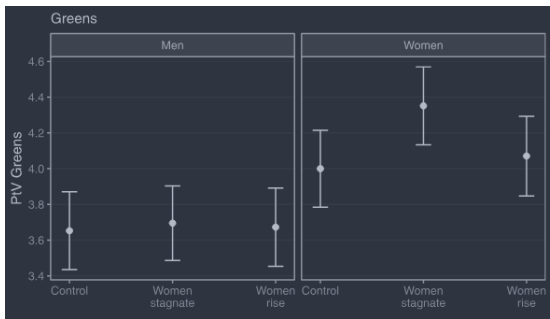


Figure: Effects of women's trajectories on voting for the Greens (Breyer 2024, p. 20)

Are the expectations by Breyer (2024) supported? What does this mean for women's representation in politics (@Johanna, Christof, Thijmen)

Gender politics of executive candidate selection and reselection

- **Research Question:** Are female politicians regarded less persuasive in justifying policy than male politicians?

Argument

Expectation:

Argument

Expectation: Men are more persuasive than women when justifying policy.

Argument

Mechanism:

Argument

Mechanism: Following social role theory, women are less often seen as assertive or strong. This has negative consequences in argumentative contexts.

- women who do not meet gendered role expectations are often evaluated more negatively

Argument

The **main hypothesis** is thus,
Men's policy justifications are judged more persuasive than women's arguments.

In addition, Anderson-Nilsson and Clayton (2021) formulate **moderating hypotheses**, the effect is conditional on...

- ...the policy domain (male or female-stereotyped)
- ...partisanship

Argument

Any **assumptions** or **scope conditions**?

Data and Method

- **Research Question:** Are female politicians regarded less persuasive in justifying policy than male politicians?
- **Main Argument:** Social role expectations disadvantage women in political debates.
- **Data and Method:** Original survey experiment in the US (N=3,200)

Data and Method

OTC Birth Control:

Respondents read:

Recently there has been a policy debate about whether birth control should be available over-the-counter. You will now hear a brief clip of that policy debate, presenting two opposing perspectives.

The debate is between two candidates in a state primary election, Susan Miller and Brian Johnson. Both candidates belong to the same political party, but are expressing different viewpoints on this issue.

Please listen carefully, as you will be asked several follow-up questions on the debate.

Figure: Stimulus material

Data and Method

Oftentimes, stimulus material is a written text. Here, they give respondents an audio snippet and an image, too. What may be good, what may be bad about this approach?

Position A: Birth control pills should be available over the counter. Making the pill available over the counter would have a variety of positive consequences. It would lower the number of unwanted pregnancies and lower teen pregnancy rates. Studies show that when teens have access to contraceptives, teen pregnancy rates drop significantly.

Position B: Birth control pills should not be available over the counter. Teen pregnancy rates are not likely to change if the pill is made available over-the-counter, as many teens do not know how to take the pill correctly. Requiring a prescription not only ensures they are instructed on proper use by a medical professional, but also encourages them to have additional screenings, tests, and conversations to promote healthy behavior.

Figure: Different positions

How do they test whether men or women are perceived as more persuasive?

Findings

TABLE I. Agreement and perceived expertise by policy area

Policy area	Agreement with Susan	Agreement with Brian	Difference	p-value
Health	0.487	0.513	0.026	0.465
Security	0.512	0.488	0.024	0.480
Tourism	0.567	0.433	0.134	≤0.001
Birth control	0.513	0.487	0.026	0.463
	Expertise, Susan	Expertise, Brian	Difference	p-value
Health	2.866	2.744	0.123	0.005
Security	2.852	2.828	0.023	0.545
Tourism	3.030	2.802	0.228	≤0.001
Birth control	3.098	2.619	0.479	≤0.001

Differences significant at $p \leq 0.05$ indicated in **bold**. $n = 3239$.

Figure: Mean comparison between Susan and Brian (Anderson-Nilsson and Clayton 2021, p. 825)

Findings

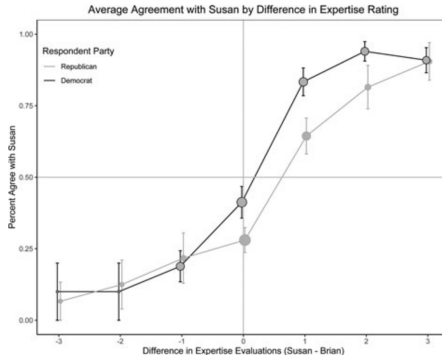


Figure: Relationship between expertise and agreement, by partisanship (Anderson-Nilsson and Clayton 2021, p. 826)

Findings

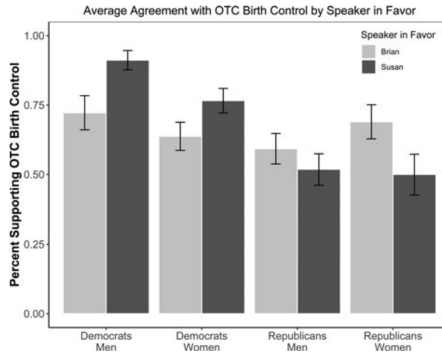


Figure: How Republican and Democratic men and women react to Susan and Brian (Anderson-Nilsson and Clayton 2021, p. 827)

Findings

- **Research Question:** Are female politicians regarded less persuasive in justifying policy than male politicians?
- **Main Argument:** Social role expectations disadvantage women in political debates.
- **Data and Method:** Original survey experiment in the US (N=3,200)
- **Results:** Women are not regarded less persuasive than men, on average; however, there are party-specific effects

Implications and alternative explanations

@Wiebke: Is this a story about partisanship?

@Till: How to make sense of the moderating effect of partisanship by Breyer and Andersson-Nilsson and Clayton?

Implications and alternative explanations

Imagine you got \$10,000 to run another survey experiment on the topic. What would you change?

Implications and alternative explanations

- intersectionality? would you vary ethnic background? what would be the challenge?
- external validity?
 - other countries? why could it be different in other countries?
 - make partisanship explicit?
- same-sex debates?
- alternative mechanisms? if it's not about expertise, what else might explain why voters prioritize one voter over another?
 - feelings towards the other group?
 - representation by men/women in own district?

It's a wrap...

- **Research Question:** Are female politicians regarded less persuasive in justifying policy than male politicians?
- **Main Argument:** Social role expectations disadvantage women in political debates.
- **Data and Method:** Original survey experiment in the US (N=3,200)
- **Results:** Women are not regarded less persuasive than men, on average; however, there are party-specific effects
- **Implications:** Negative judgements of women by some voters may be offset by positive judgements by others.

What we've learned today...

- how voters' gender biases may matter for female representation in politics
- that there may not be a general backlash against gender equality
- how one can examine gendered effects on political persuasion with experimental methods

To prepare for next week...

- next week, we'll deal with the role of the supply side, we focus both on political parties' role in gender biases and individual reasons of why the pool of female candidates is small
- Main reading:
 - **Bernhard R, Shames S, and Teele DL (2021)** To Emerge? Breadwinning, Motherhood, and Women's Decisions to Run for Office. *American Political Science Review* **115** (2), 379–394. ISSN: 0003-0554, 1537-5943. DOI: [10.1017/S0003055420000970](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000970)
- Complementary readings

To prepare for next week...

- **Thomsen DM and King AS** (2020) Women's Representation and the Gendered Pipeline to Power. *American Political Science Review* **114** (4), 989–1000. ISSN: 0003-0554, 1537-5943. DOI: [10.1017/S0003055420000404](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000404)
- **Erfort C** (2023) *Gendered Targeting: Do Parties Tailor Their Campaign Ads to Women?* DOI: [10.31219/osf.io/5vs9b](https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/5vs9b)
- **Erzeel S and Celis K** (2016) Political Parties, Ideology and the Substantive Representation of Women. *Party Politics* **22** (5), 576–586. ISSN: 1354-0688. DOI: [10.1177/1354068816655561](https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068816655561)

Thank you for your attention!
Any further questions?

Literature

-  **Anderson-Nilsson G and Clayton A (2021)** Gender and Policy Persuasion. *Political Science Research and Methods* **9** (4), 818–831.
-  **Bernhard R, Shames S, and Teele DL (2021)** To Emerge? Breadwinning, Motherhood, and Women's Decisions to Run for Office. *American Political Science Review* **115** (2), 379–394.
-  **Breyer M (2024)** Backlash or Progressive Mobilization? Voter Reactions to Perceived Trajectories of Women's Representation. *Comparative Political Studies*, 00104140231223745.
-  **Burn-Murdoch J (2024)** A New Global Gender Divide Is Emerging. *Financial Times*.
-  **Erfort C (2023)** *Gendered Targeting: Do Parties Tailor Their Campaign Ads to Women?* 2023.
-  **Erzeel S and Celis K (2016)** Political Parties, Ideology and the Substantive Representation of Women. *Party Politics* **22** (5), 576–586.

Literature



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