

Gender and Political Representation

Session 9: Institutional Fixes

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24 June 2026

What we did last time...



Figure: Source: [Wikipedia](#)

What we did last time...

- we zeroed in on the candidate selection pool which is heavily skewed towards men
- we discussed what might cause the 'lack in ambition'
- we focused on household factors that shape women's decision to enter politics

Plan for today

We are entering the final bloc of our seminar:

1. we have established crucial concepts in the study of gender in politics
2. we have identified cultural and institutional causes of women's under-representation in politics
3. in the following sessions, we will evaluate the efficiency of tools developed to mitigate male bias in political representation

Today: institutions – not as barriers but facilitators of women's representation + preparation for next week's visit by Simone Wendland

Everything lost?

“Is this really the case? Is the history of women one of Sisyphean struggle against odds that remain constant and overwhelming? Not quite. [...] Although the result is not a steady move toward equitable treatment of women, it is a world in which progress is certainly sufficient to justify optimism.” (Jamieson 1995, p. 7)

The idea of feminist institutionalism

As we have seen before, institutions are both *gendered* and *gendering* (Mackay 2011).

- existing norms in societies influence how institutions are gendered (e.g. the plough)
- the rules of the game shape whether politics reinforce gender inequalities (e.g. voting systems)

Institutions can also be re-gendered, which requires the work of policy entrepreneurs that strategically suggest changes towards more gender equality

The idea of feminist institutionalism

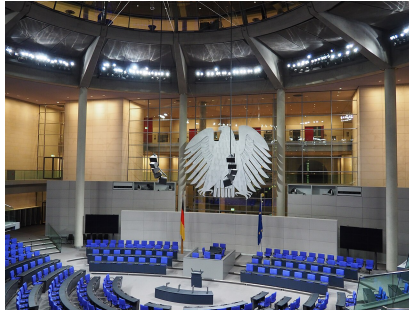


Figure: Parliaments as a gendered and gendering workspace, Source: [Source](#)

Which aspects of parliaments are gendered?

The idea of feminist institutionalism

‘Sexist and undemocratic’: Pregnant MEPs demand ability to vote on maternity leave

The European Parliament has no official procedure to permit parental leave and remote voting.

SHARE



"It's 2023. If you're forced to choose between your votes and your child that's a really bad signal, especially for young women," Lara Wolters, a Dutch MEP from the Socialists & Democrats group said (European Parliament)

Figure: A call for a gender-sensitive EP, Source: [Politico](#)

The idea of feminist institutionalism

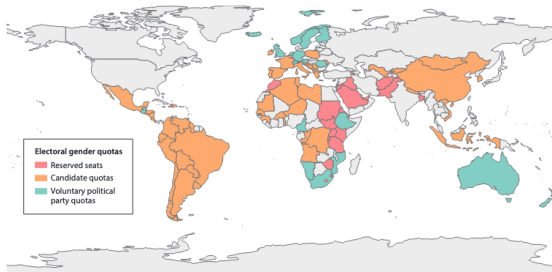


Figure 1

Map of countries that have adopted electoral gender quotas. Countries are coded as having a voluntary party quota if the total number of adopting parties amounts to at least 30% of the legislature. Two countries—Rwanda and Mauritania—have both reserved seat and candidate quotas, coded here as having the latter. Data are from Hughes et al. (2017a), Clayton & Zetterberg (2018), and International IDEA (2020).

The idea of feminist institutionalism

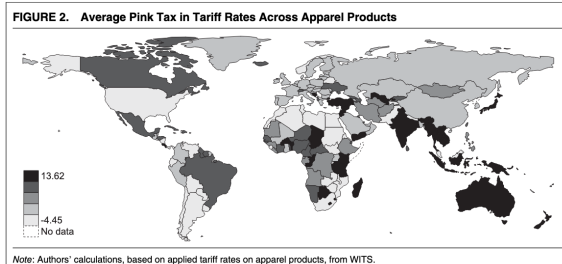


Figure: Another map, another story (Betz, Fortunato, and O'Brien 2021)

@our experts: Friederike, Paulina and Wiebke, what does this map show us, and how is the article related to institutions?

Direct Democracy and Women's Political Engagement

- **Research Question:** How does direct democracy affect political participation of women?
- **Main Argument:**
- **Data and Method:**
- **Results:**
- **Implications:**

Which values does Kim (2019) see in direct democracy?

Three implications of direct democracy



Figure: The three faces of direct democracy

Three implications of direct democracy

1. *signalling effect*: showing that concerns are taken seriously
2. *information provision*: more information on political decisions
→ reduces gender gap in political participation
3. durable effects on resources
→ spill-over to adjacent fields of participation

Three implications of direct democracy

- **Research Question:** How does direct democracy affect political participation of women?
- **Main Argument:** Direct democracy reduces the gender gap in political participation and encourages women to participate more frequently in politics.
- **Data and Method:**
- **Results:**
- **Implications:**

Data and Method

What is the problem when analysing the effect of institutional reform on political participation? How does Kim (2019) solve it?

Data and Method

In Sweden, the Swedish central government decided that municipalities should transition towards a representative governing system to improve policy output

- Only a few municipalities followed suit
- Swedish government made the change compulsory for municipalities above 1,500 inhabitants
- Kim (2019) can leverage the institutional requirement of this reform to compare the turnout in parliamentary elections between municipalities below and above 1,500 inhabitants

Does comparing these municipalities raise any other concerns, e.g. with regard to urban/rural differences?

Data and Method

No, because we are only comparing municipalities just above and below the threshold → they should be very similar in other aspects

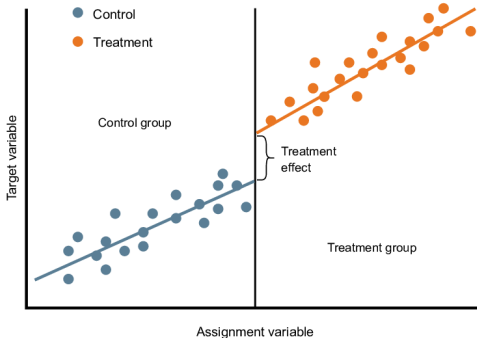


Figure: The idea of regression-discontinuity designs ([source](#))

Data and Method

TABLE 1 Number of Observations by Institution Type

	Direct Democracy	Representative Democracy
Population _{t-1} ≤ 1,500	9,234	1,459
Population _{t-1} > 1,500	0	5,891
Total	9,234	7,350

Figure: Municipalities with and without direct democracy after the reform

What becomes evident? (@Paul?)

Data and Method

- **Research Question:** How does direct democracy affect political participation of women?
- **Main Argument:** Direct democracy reduces the gender gap in political participation and encourage women to participate more frequently in politics.
- **Data and Method:** Fuzzy regression-discontinuity that identifies the effect of direct democracy on the gap in political participation between men and women (CATE)
- **Results:**
- **Implications:**

Findings

TABLE 2 The RD Effects of Direct Democracy

	(1) Women's Turnout (%)	(2) Men's Turnout (%)	(3) % Votes Women Cast
Bandwidth [1,500 ± ...]	291	388	278
Direct Democracy	3.946 (0.950)	3.517 (0.643)	1.854 (0.314)
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Covariates	✓	✓	✓
Number of Municipalities	549	679	533
Number of Observations	2,792	3,705	2,679

Note: Table entries are coefficient estimates with standard errors in parentheses.

Question by Karen: Does the positive effect on both men and women's turnout neutralize the impact on the political system?

Findings

TABLE 3 The Effect of Women's Participation in Direct Democracy on Women's Subsequent Electoral Participation

	(1) Women's Turnout _t (%)	(2) Men's Turnout _t (%)	(3) % Votes Women Cast _t
Women's Participation in DD _{t-1}	-0.250 (0.162)	-0.328 (0.121)	-0.059 (0.057)
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
County Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Controls	✓	✓	✓
Observations	214	214	214
R ²	0.535	0.558	0.249
Adjusted R ²	0.507	0.532	0.208

Note: Table entries are regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Question/comments by Till and Paul: Are these results surprising? What could be left open?

Findings

- **Research Question:** How does direct democracy affect political participation of women?
- **Main Argument:** Direct democracy reduces the gender gap in political participation and encourage women to participate more frequently in politics.
- **Data and Method:** Fuzzy regression-discontinuity that identifies the effect of direct democracy on the gap in political participation between men and women
- **Results:** Direct democracy increases female political participation but does not spill-over into other forms of participation
- **Implications:**

Implications and alternative explanations

Question by Lara and Lucy: Do these findings translate to contemporary democracies and current forms of citizen participation?

What we've learned today...

- we introduced the idea of feminist institutionalism
- discussed different measures on how institutions can facilitate female participation
- learned what a regression discontinuity (RDD) design is
- ...and how we can critically evaluate arguments

Visit by Simone Wendland



Next week, Simone Wendland will visit us.

Visit by Simone Wendland

Simone Wendland is

- MP for the CDU in the NRW state parliament
- She was born in Münster, where she also studied
- Committee member for legal concerns, transportation and women's equality

Visit by Simone Wendland

Form three groups to develop questions. Among others, questions can concern:

- Issues of Representation
- Structural/Institutional barriers
- Public biases
- Plans to tackle gender inequalities

Visit by Simone Wendland

Add your thoughts to this [flinga board](#)



To prepare for the week after next...

- Next week, Simone Wendland visits us
- Please be on time (10:00)

Thank you for your attention!
Any further questions?

Literature



Betz T, Fortunato D, and O'brien DZ (2021) Women's Descriptive Representation and Gendered Import Tax Discrimination. *American Political Science Review* **115** (1), 307–315.



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Mackay F (2011) Conclusion: Towards a Feminist Institutionalism? *Gender, Politics and Institutions*. Ed. by ML Krook and F Mackay. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011, 181–196.