

Original Paper

A Seat at the Table or a Power Seat: The Impact of Simple Representation Versus Power Representation of Women in Government on Funding for Primary Education

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Abstract

Scholars have repeatedly shown that female politicians focus more on common good issues such as health care and education than their male counterparts. When men hold the majority of positions of political power these issues may not be raised for debate within government even if women are present. Using a cross-country dataset, this research examines the impact of women in government on public spending on primary education. Specifically, it explores whether it is enough for women to be represented in government, or if they must have a position of power to effect policy outcomes. The analysis results indicate that both women's simple representation and power representation are significantly positively correlated with increases in federal spending on primary education; however, when women hold positions of political power there is a greater impact on funding than when they simply hold a seat in the legislature.

Keywords

women representation, government, simple representation, power representation, primary education, cross country

1. Introduction

For years research has shown that the representation of women shifts the policy priorities of local and federal governments (Schwindt-Bayer, 2018). Multiple scholars have found that a higher percentage of women in government is positively correlated to increased spending on healthcare, childcare, and the prevention of gender-based violence and is negatively correlated to spending on the military

(Schwindt-Bayer, 2018; Miner, 2017; Rivas, 2013). However, previous research on how the number of women in government impacts federal spending on public primary education has been inconclusive, even as it shows that women place a higher priority on education than men. Nonetheless, previous scholars have largely ignored the difference in impact between the simple representation of women in government, or the percentage of government seats held by women, and the power representation of women in government, or the percentage of seats held by women who hold veto power or the power to set the agenda. Overlooking the potential difference between the two types of political representation can undermine analyses of the impact of women in government and perhaps even lead to inconclusive results. The primary thrust of this research is to analyze if this difference, simple representation versus power representation, has a significant impact on the amount of funding allocated for primary education.

This study employs data from more than 60 countries to empirically test if the type of representation significantly affects the funding for primary education. The effects of women in government, especially women in positions of political power, is central not only to a multitude of economic and socio-economic policy outcomes but is especially relevant today as the world has observed how many women political leaders have addressed the COVID-19 pandemic differently than their male counterparts. Understanding the role of women in government; particularly the potentially different effects of women in government based on the type of representation is vital to the growing body of literature on women in government. The findings of this analysis will assist scholars and policy makers in understanding whether women's prioritization of primary education translates into policy changes that emphasize the importance of education through increased funding. More importantly, the findings will analyze whether women are able to enact their policy priorities when they are simply represented or if they must hold power, and effectively outrank their male colleagues, in order to have a significant impact on the issues they pursue. In other words, is a seat at the table sufficient, or must women hold a power seat to enact policy change?

2. Literature

Research exploring the significance of women in government continues to grow along with the increasing number of female government representatives across the globe. The focus of the field is split into two broad categories: the impact of the simple representation of women in government and the differences in policy priorities between men and women. This body of research is supported by extensive literature in economics and finance examining the effects of women holding positions of power in a business setting. Nonetheless, the research on the importance of women in power has not considered the political realm, leading to a significant gap in the literature regarding the potential difference in policy outcomes based on the legislative representation of women and the political leadership of women.

2.1 Women in Government

Currently, women make up only 24% of representative governments worldwide even though they make up about 49% of the global population (UN Women, 2018). While the low numbers of women in government make it difficult to fully observe the importance of women's political representation, many scholars have found that having women in government not only benefits female constituents, but the country as a whole (Barnes & Jones, 2018; Schwindt-Bayer, 2018; Rivas, 2013; Bratton & Ray, 2002). Barnes and Jones (2018) found that female representatives are more likely to respond to issues that directly affect women than their male colleagues, and that constituents, both men and women, show higher levels of trust and interaction with their governments when women are in leadership positions. Moreover, the representation of women in government increases the institution's efficiency and responsiveness to constituents (Barnes & Janes 2018; Schwindt-Bayer, 2018). Women have also been shown to prioritize different policy issues than men and, therefore, their representation leads to substantive changes in common good policies relating to healthcare, childcare, violence against women, and education (Schwindt-Bayer, 2018; Miner, 2017; Rivas, 2013).

Many scholars have shown that an increase in the number of women in government significantly decreases levels of corruption and, therefore, increases public trust in and engagement with political representatives (Dollar et al., 1999; Barnes & Jones, 2018). Dollar and his colleagues (1999) extended behavioral research on women's integrity to the political realm and found that an increase in the political representation of women is significantly correlated to a decrease in a country's level of corruption. This reality, and the public's perception of it, also leads to increased trust in government (Barnes & Jones, 2018; Cowell-Meyers, 2001). As constituents' trust in their government increases so does their engagement with their elected representatives (Barnes & Jones 2018; Schwindt-Bayer, 2018; Cowell-Meyers, 2001). When represented by a woman, both men and women are more likely to directly engage with their representative by voting, voicing their opinion on issues, and attending events such as town halls (Barnes & Jones, 2018; Schwindt-Bayer, 2018; Cowell-Meyers, 2001). Further, women have been shown to be more receptive to their constituents' concerns than their male counterparts as the bills they sponsor and pass often directly affect the people they represent (Barnes & Jones 2018; Schwindt-Bayer, 2018).

Women have been shown to both improve the effectiveness and efficiency of governments by promptly responding to constituent concerns and working across party lines to pass comprehensive legislation (Barnes & Jones, 2018). Additionally, scholars found that female deputies in Argentina sponsor an average of seven more bills per session of Congress than their male colleagues, a finding that is reflected globally (Barnes & Jones, 2018; Schwindt-Bayer 2018; Bratton & Ray, 2002). These bills address issues that directly affect both male and female constituents such as the gender pay gap, paid family leave, violence against women, and access to affordable healthcare (Miner, 2017; Schwindt-Bayer, 2018; Porter, 2003; Celis, 2006). Rivas (2013) concluded that female politicians are more focused on common good issues than their male counterparts. More specifically, Miner (2017)

found that female representatives generally introduce legislation that supports women and families, such as education policies, to a greater extent than their male colleagues do. According to Elisabeth Porter, “Women call attention to specific issues related to family needs of food, water, shelter, education, and health” (2003, p. 250). Additionally, Karen Celis’ 2006 study of women Members of Parliament in the Belgian parliament demonstrates that women invest more time and energy in representing women’s interests and that a greater number of women in government leads male representatives to prioritize women’s issues as well. As the representation of women increases, so does the likelihood that issues prioritized by women will be enacted into policy (Bratton & Ray, 2002; Barnes & Jones, 2018; Htun et al., 2013).

2.2 Women’s Social Priorities

Historically scholars have attributed “women’s interests” to three main gender-based experiences. First, women’s interests are defined by their traditional role in society: their ability to reproduce and their traditional responsibilities as caregivers (Celis et al., 2014; Wangnerüd, 2009). Second, women’s interests are based on their experiences in the labor market, specifically in the opportunities they receive and challenges they face (Celis et al., 2014; Wangnerüd, 2009). Finally, women’s political priorities are shaped by how their roles are redefined as gender equality becomes more attainable (Celis et al., 2014; Wangnerüd, 2009). These categories are based on the gendered social roles theory which states that the social roles of adult men and women - such as employee, homemaker, and parent-shape women’s social priorities (McCright & Xiao, 2014; Celis et al., 2014). Another prominent theory in the field is the gendered socialization theory. This theory argues that young girls are socialized to care about different issues than young boys (McCright & Xiao, 2014). In her research, Wangnerüd (2000) found that women prioritized social welfare policies as well as measures for gender equity at a higher level than men. Wangnerüd’s findings fit into the three aforementioned categories as social welfare priorities (also known as common good issues) are thought to be linked to women’s traditional responsibilities.

Additionally, the focus on gender equity is connected both to women’s employment experiences and the struggle for gender equity which is often based on women’s treatment in the labor market (Wangnerüd, 2000; Celis et al., 2014; Wangnerüd, 2009). Wangnerüd (2000) also found that the general public’s political priorities varied based on gender. While both men and women ranked jobs and the environment as highly important, other issues were focused on by one gender and almost ignored by the other (Wangnerüd, 2000). Women overwhelmingly prioritized family policy, healthcare, and social policy, all of which were barely mentioned by male voters (Wangnerüd, 2000). On the other hand, men prioritized taxes and the economy, issues that women generally did not mention (Wangnerüd, 2000).

As women’s political and social equality has increased, family issues have often been brought to the forefront as women’s advocacy on their behalf has led to substantial social and political changes (Saint-Germain, 1989; Schwindt-Bayer, 2018; Celis et al., 2014). Healthcare is a prime example of women’s advocacy and success. Tolbert and Steuernagel (2001) found that women brought attention to

healthcare issues on the social level, often leading to political change. Koven and Michel (1990) demonstrated that the rise of public health and welfare policies in the United States and Europe coincided with the rise of women's social movements in the same areas. As women advocated for themselves, they campaigned for child and maternity health, which fits within the gendered social roles theory's categories of women's traditional role in society and the redefinition of that role through progress towards equity (Koven & Michel, 1990; Celis et al., 2014; Wangnerüd, 2009). Their advocacy led to the beginnings of the modern welfare system to protect mothers and their children (Koven & Michel, 1990). Additionally, the women did not stop with maternity and child-care: they expanded their efforts to labor rights, economic reforms, and social safety nets (Koven & Michel, 1990). The impact of women's advocacy and action can still be seen in the prioritization of family policy globally as women continue to focus on these issues politically, socially, and economically.

Another priority within the family policy category is education. In the 1880s, women began to advocate for better education, specifically kindergarten and primary education, for their children (Koven & Michel, 1990). The focus on education both enabled women to push their children and families to progress socially and freed women from the total responsibility of their children's education and care (Koven & Michel, 1990; Ailwood, 2007). In this way, education fits into all three of the gendered social role theory's categories of women's interests. First, women's promotion of education fits within the maternal role of women as they are advocating on behalf of their children (Celis et al., 2014; Koven & Michel, 1990; Ailwood, 2007; Cooper, 2007). Second, the accessibility of education means that women are no longer solely responsible for their children's care and education which fundamentally changes women's responsibilities as it frees them to pursue personal interests outside of their maternal role (Celis et al., 2014; Koven & Michel, 1990; Ailwood, 2007). Additionally, as quality education becomes more accessible for women, they are able to advance socially and financially as they learn marketable skills and become more independent which in turn leads to greater gender equity (Schwindt-Bayer, 2018). Finally, as the availability of quality education increases, women have the ability to enter the workforce and advance professionally (Celis et al., 2014; Koven & Michel, 1990; Ailwood, 2007). For these reasons, feminist movements as well as other women's movements globally promote education as a path towards gender equity (Koven & Michel, 1990; Schwindt-Bayer, 2018). Education is one of the most highly prioritized issues by women globally and is the issue that women publicly support most often, making it a topic of interest for governments and their representatives (Wangnerüd, 2000; Wangnerüd, 2009; Celis, 2006).

2.3 Women in Positions of Power

While the number of women in government globally continues to grow, the number of women in positions of political power remains relatively stagnant. This raises questions for scholars who focus on the impact of women's representation in government (Wängnerud, 2009; Schwindt-Bayer, 2018; O'Brien & Piscopo, 2019; Weldon, 2002). In his seminal research on political decision-making, Tsebelis (1995) defined political power as individuals or groups whose agreement is necessary for

policy change, specifically for a change in the status quo. For example, a representative in the United States House of Representatives has very little power when compared to the Speaker of the House, a position that holds the power to decide the agenda, therefore directing which bills and policies are discussed and prioritized. Globally, positions of political power are usually occupied by men (Schwindt-Bayer, 2018). The power that accompanies these positions determines which issues are prioritized, meaning that when women are excluded, their priorities can be devalued based on their inability to direct policy (Tsebelis, 1995). As scholars examine how women's representation impacts the policy creation surrounding women's priorities, the scholarship must include the influence of men continuing to dominate positions of political power.

One of the commonly cited reasons for the lack of women in positions of power, in the political realm as well as in the private sector, is the conflation of leadership traits with traditionally masculine characteristics (Carlin & Kelly, 2009; Bierema, 2016). As Bierema (2016) explains, women in leadership roles are caught in a double bind as they are expected to maintain their traditional feminine traits while fulfilling a masculine image of leadership. Ideal leaders are generally seen as strong, decisive, and assertive, but when women lean into these traits, they are seen as cold and unlikeable (Bierema, 2016; Kanter, 2008). This means that women leaders cannot succeed regardless of whether they fulfill the feminine traits, which are seen as too soft, or the masculine traits, leading to demands that they be softer and warmer (Bierema, 2016; Carlin & Kelly, 2009; Catalyst, 2018; Kanter, 2008). This double standard is based in a history of male leadership as institutional structures prevented women from holding leadership positions or obtaining power (Kanter, 2008). As women were historically not present as leaders, more feminine traits are seen as contradictory to leadership traits, increasing the standards for women in power to often unreachable levels (Bierema, 2016; Catalyst, 2018; Oakley, 2000).

However, while there are comparatively few women in leadership positions, research has repeatedly shown the importance of having women in power (Thomas, 2003; Schwindt-Bayer, 2018; Erdhart et al., 2003; Cambell & Vera, 2009; Hoobler et al., 2018). In the business realm, the presence of women in senior management positions is strongly positively correlated with the firm's performance and valuation (Erdhart et al., 2003; Cambell & Vera, 2009; Hoobler et al., 2018). Moreover, scholars have found that women, in many instances, are more effective as leaders as they are generally problem-oriented instead of status-oriented like many male leaders (Kanter, 2008; Schwindt-Bayer, 2018; Barnes & Jones, 2018). In the political arena, Weldon (2002) states that when women have formal positions of power, their influence is stronger than when women are simply represented in the institution. Weldon's (2002) findings echo Tsebelis' (1995) definition of leadership as when women are excluded from political leadership, it is more difficult for them to influence both debated issues and policy priorities.

Few scholars have addressed the lack of women in positions of political power or the differences between the simple and power representation of women in government. Many articles point to

exploring the importance of formal leadership positions as an avenue for future research, but few have attempted to fill the gap (O'Brien & Piscopo, 2019; Weldon, 2002). The lack of scholarship in this area means that researchers and policy makers do not have a complete understanding of how the different types of female representation in government (simple versus power) affect women's policy priorities like education. This analysis compares the difference between simple female representation and female power representation on the amount of federal spending for public primary education as a percentage of country GDP. The following section provides the methods and data used to analyze this research question.

3. Method

A series of regression analyses using cross-country data are used to explore the potentially different effects on primary education funding based on the different types of female representation in government. The simple female representation regression addresses the basic question of whether the simple representation of women in government generally makes a difference in funding for primary education. Previous research has found that as the percentage of women in government increases funding for issues prioritized by women such as healthcare and childcare increase as well; however, past findings have been inconclusive in regard to whether women significantly impact funding for education as some scholars argue that they do while others argue that they do not based on different data sets and methods (Celis et al., 2014; Koven & Michel, 1990; Ailwood, 2007; Cooper, 2007). The simple female representation model is defined as:

$$PEF = \beta_0 + \beta_1(SRW) + \beta_i X + \varepsilon$$

where PEF is primary education funding as a percentage of GDP, SRW is the simple representation of women in government and X is a matrix of control variables. The female power representation regression model is defined as:

$$PEF = \beta_0 + \beta_1(PRW) + \beta_i X + \varepsilon$$

where PEF is primary education funding as a percentage of GDP, PRW is the power representation of women in government and X is a matrix of control variables. The female power representation model addresses the specific gap in the literature that has overlooked the potential difference in the type of female representation in government. It is hypothesized that the coefficient on PRW will be significant, positive and larger than the coefficient on SRW . This hypothesis is based on all three sections of the literature. First, women in government work on policy connected to social issues prioritized by women (Celis et al., 2014; Koven & Michel, 1990; Ailwood, 2007; Cooper, 2007). One of the most highly prioritized issues for women globally is education leading to the conclusion that if women are in government, education policy will be prioritized. However, as the third section of the literature demonstrates, political power is necessary to enact policy change, but positions of power are predominately held by men (Tsbelis, 1995; Schwindt-Bayer, 2018). The combination of these research streams suggests that women in positions of power will have a more significant impact on education

funding relative to women who simply have a seat at the table. Thus, the primary hypothesis to be tested in this analysis is stated:

H1: The power representation of women will have a significant, positive impact on funding for education that is greater than the simple representation of women.

3.1 Data

The dependent variable in both regression models is the federal expenditures on primary education as a percent of GDP (*PEF*) in 2015, which is available through the World Bank. The *SRW* and *PRW* variables are provided by the World Bank and the World Economic Forum, respectively. *SRW* measures the percentage of seats in parliament held by women. The *PRW* is the World Economic Forum's Political Empowerment sub-index which compiles the proportion of women in political leadership roles based on the number in ministerial positions and the number of female heads of state. This index measures the proportion of political leadership positions held by women, or positions where women have power over their male counterparts; be that the power to set the agenda or veto power.

The control variables used in both regression models are the same and were chosen as they are indicators of a country's wealth as well as its public's education level, both of which are directly correlated to spending on education (McGrath, 2010). First, GDP per capita provided by the World Bank is included as a control variable as wealthier countries tend to spend more on education than developing nations (McGrath, 2010). Second, the percentage of the youth population aged zero to fourteen years is controlled for to account for the size of the youth population, which is available through the World Bank. Next, a country's educational attainment measured by the percentage of the adult population who completed primary education is controlled for, which is available from the World Bank. Educational attainment is controlled for as more educated societies tend to prioritize education (McGrath, 2010). Finally, the Gini coefficient is controlled for as countries with a more equal distribution of income tend to prioritize education, especially primary education (McGrath, 2010). This data is available from the World Bank.

The independent variables are all measured in the year 2013 while the data for the dependent variable comes from 2015 in order to allow for the time it takes for policy to be written, passed, and enacted. The natural log GDP per capita is used as it provides a better fit to the data and minimizes the likelihood of heteroskedasticity. Although the simple representation data and population data is available for over 180 countries and territories, power representation data is only available for 106. In total, 69 countries each have the data observations required to estimate the simple representation model and 66 countries each have the data observations required to estimate the power representation model. A list of all of the countries included in this analysis is provided in Table 1. The measures and sources for each variable are shown in Table 2 and the summary statistics are in Table 3.

Table 1. List of Countries Included in Analysis

Albania	Haiti*	Nicaragua
Argentina**	Honduras	Niger*
Australia	Hungary	Norway
Austria	Iceland	Pakistan
Armenia*	Indonesia	Peru
Belgium	Ireland	Poland
Benin	Israel	Portugal
Brazil	Italy	Romania
Burundi	Jamaica	Russian Federation
Cameroon	Kazakhstan	Rwanda
Chile	Kenya	Senegal
Colombia	Latvia	Serbia
Costa Rica	Lithuania	Slovenia
Cyprus	Luxembourg	South Africa
Czech Republic	Malawi	Spain
Ecuador	Malaysia	Sri Lanka
El Salvador	Maldives	Sweden
Estonia	Mali	Switzerland
Finland	Mauritius	Tajikistan
France	Mexico	Togo*
Germany	Mongolia	Turkey
Ghana	New Zealand	Tunisia
Guatemala	Nepal	Uganda
		United Kingdom

*Included in Simple Representation only.

**Included in Power Representation only.

Table 2. Summary of Data Sources

Variable	Data Measure
Primary Education Funding (PEF)	The percentage of GDP dedicated to primary education, World Bank (2015)
Simple Representation (SRW)	The percentage of seats in parliament held by women, World Bank (2013)
Power Representation (PRW)	The proportion of positions of political power held by women, World Economic Forum (2013)

GDPPC	GDP per capita (in constant US dollars), World Bank (2013)
Population (Pop)	The percentage of the population aged 0-14 years old, World Bank (2013)
Education Attainment (EDU)	Percentage of adult population who have completed primary education, provided World Bank (2013)
Gini	Gini Coefficient, 0-100, provided by World Bank (2013)

Table 3. Summary Statistics

Variable	Number of Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Primary Education Funding (PEF)	70	4.87050761	1.303687	2.22875	7.71106
Simple Representation (SRW)	69	23.7348485	11.9742736	4.2	63.8
Power Representation (PRW)	66	0.2475873	0.15296201	0.035	0.75
LnGDPPC	70	8.88892606	1.51124868	1.51124868	11.54947
Population (Pop)	70	25.954291	10.660214	13.2435	50.2157
Education Attainment (EDU)	70	14.8013433	10.1906627	0.24	37.95
Gini	70	38.3927866	9.33723363	23.7	63.2

4. Results

Table 4 provides the regression results for the three regression models; a baseline model of just the control variables, the simple representation model, and the power representation model. In reference to the simple representation model, the coefficient on simple representation (*SRW*) is significant and positive at 95 percent confidence with a coefficient value of 0.0362. The analysis results indicate that with each one percent increase in the number of legislative seats held by women, the percentage of a state's GDP dedicated to primary education increases by 0.0326.

Table 4. Estimated Regressions: Primary Education Funding (PEF) as Dependent Variable

	Baseline Model	Simple Representation Model	Power Representation Model
<i>Intercept</i>	1.840	1.317	1.869
<i>t-value</i>	0.933	0.679	0.954

VIF		0	0
<i>SRW</i>		0.0326**	
<i>t</i> -value		2.381	
VIF		1.15	
1/VIF		0.87	
<i>PRW</i>			2.763**
<i>t</i> -value			2.582
VIF			1.10
1/VIF			0.91
<i>LnGDPPC</i>	0.283*	0.245*	0.194
<i>t</i> -value	1.918	1.692	1.322
VIF	2.08	2.11	2.03
1/VIF	0.49	0.47	0.49
<i>Pop</i>	0.00542	0.00470	-0.005
<i>t</i> -value	0.263	0.234	-0.242
VIF	1.97	1.97	1.96
1/VIF	0.51	0.51	0.51
<i>EDU</i>	0.0234	0.00903	0.01
<i>t</i> -value	1.396	0.516	0.595
VIF	1.17	1.30	1.27
1/VIF	0.85	0.77	0.79
<i>Gini</i>	0.00114	0.00913	0.016
<i>t</i> -value	0.0571	0.461	0.786
VIF	1.44	1.47	1.50
1/VIF	0.69	0.68	0.67
<i>Adj. R</i> ²	0.0416	0.101	0.109
<i>F</i>	1.75	2.53	2.58
<i>n</i>	70	69	66
<i>Mean VIF</i>	1.66	1.60	1.57

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

While the estimated simple representation regression suggests that the simple representation of women in government is significant for public spending on primary education, the impact is relatively small which can explain the lack of consensus in previous research on the significance of women's simple representation for spending on education. However, the analysis does lend support to previous research which has found that when women are represented in government, policies they prioritize are promoted. Overall, the results of the simple representation model indicate that while women being present in

government does have a significant impact on public funding for primary education, the impact is relatively small and there is little shift in priorities, and therefore distribution of funding, by the government even as the percentage of seats in parliament held by women increases.

As shown in Table 4, in the estimated power representation model, which considers female power representation in government rather than simple representation, the coefficient on power representation (*PRW*) is positive and significant at 95 percent confidence with a coefficient value of 2.763. These results support H1, which states that the power representation of women will have a more significant, positive impact on funding for education than the simple representation does. While both coefficients on *SRW* and *PRW* are significant and positive in their respective regressions, the coefficient for women in positions of political power (*PRW*) is notably higher. The estimated coefficient indicates that for each one-point increase in the proportion of positions of political power held by women in a state, the percentage of the GDP dedicated to primary education increases by 2.763, an impact that is almost 82 times the impact of the simple representation of women. Therefore, when women hold positions of power, their impact on funding for education is greater than when they simply hold seats in the legislature, a finding which supports H1.

4.1 Robustness Tests

Both models were tested for heteroskedasticity and multicollinearity. In reference to heteroskedasticity, tests were completed using the Breusch-Pagan method, which found no signs of heteroskedasticity as the *p*-value was greater than 0.05 in both cases. The lack of heteroskedasticity means that the data does not have low or high outliers that could skew the results. As no signs of heteroskedasticity were detected in the models, the test reinforces the validity of the predicted model and eliminates the need to control the weights of the observations.

In reference to multicollinearity, both the correlation matrix of the data and the variance inflation factors (VIFs) were considered. As shown in Table 5, the correlation matrix does not indicate any potential signs of multicollinearity. The VIF values are provided with the regression results in Table 4. Given that the mean VIF is less than 10, regression problems related to multicollinearity are mitigated. The robustness tests offer evidence reinforcing the validity of the models and regression results.

Table 5. Correlation Matrix

	PEF	SRW	PRW	Lngdppc	Population	Education	Gini
PEF	1.00						
SRW	0.3164	1.00					
PRW	0.3710	0.7390	1.00				
Lngdppc	0.2440	0.0686	0.2217	1.00			
Population	-0.1830	-0.0098	-0.1924	-0.6856	1.00		
Education	0.0654	0.2183	0.1017	-0.2689	0.2746	1.00	

Gini	-0.0442	0.0994	-0.1824	-0.4655	0.4323	0.4004	1.00
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5. Discussion

Comparing the two models highlights that while both the simple representation of women and the power representation of women are significant at the 95 percent confidence interval, the coefficient on power representation is substantially larger. This suggests that that women in positions of political power have a significantly greater influence on policy outcomes relative to women who simply have a seat at the table. Specifically, the impact of each one-point increase in the proportion of women in positions of political power has an effect that is almost 82 times larger than each one-point increase in the percentage of seats in parliament held by women.

The findings suggest that in order for women to enact policy in the areas they prioritize, such as education, it is not enough for them to just hold seats in the government. Instead, women tend have a much greater impact when they hold positions of power, specifically when they have the power to set the agenda or have veto power. Previous research has shown that female politicians often further policy priorities that have traditionally been linked to societal issues, such as education. The analysis results presented here suggest that female politicians' voices are not being heard as loudly when women have a seat at the table, or simple representation, compared to when they hold a power seat, or have power representation. These findings support the idea that in order to ensure that female priorities are addressed by the legislature, women must effectively outrank their male counterparts; a reality that has substantial implications for analyses of women's influence in government and the functioning capabilities of government overall.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Implications

The results of this research demonstrate that it is not enough for women to simply be represented in government for their voices to be heard and their policy priorities reflected by their officials. Instead, women must hold positions of political power where they either have the ability to set the agenda or veto power in order to enact change in policy areas that they prioritize. The implications of these findings are twofold. First, they influence our understanding of the impacts of women's political representation. Having a seat at the table is valuable, but a power seat is exceedingly more valuable in reference to enacting policy change. Second, it has serious implications for which issues are being addressed by governments and whose priorities are being addressed. Thus, if countries and the majority of their constituents desire policy designed to better society outcomes such as healthcare, education, childcare, and even government responses to COVID-19, it is critical to consider the type of seats that are held by women in their governments.

6.2 Limitations and Paths for Future Research

Although the analysis results presented meet various robustness checks, the analysis is not without limitations. First, many countries were not included in this analysis due to the lack of data availability. Further, several of the control variables are not significant in the simple and power representation models while previous research suggests that these variables should statistically affect primary education funding. These limitations raise questions as to whether the results will hold when other variables or more countries are included in the model. Moreover, a future model could include different measures for prioritization of education in addition to the percentage of GDP dedicated to funding primary education. These additions to the models would provide a more in-depth understanding of how the simple representation and power representation of women in government affects funding for education. Another path for future research is to explore if the results found here at the national level are also observed at the local level. The implications of these differences would be interesting to better understand how women in government implement policies about their priorities, such as education, in government generally, not just at the national level.

Finally, there is still a large gap in the literature about the impact of women's leadership in government. This research takes a first step at closing this gap and continuing the conversation, but there are still many questions to be answered about the significance of the power representation of women in government, which, thus far, has predominately been ignored in literature examining women's political priorities and the impacts of women's simple representation in government. The lack of research is in part explained by the lack of women in leadership positions globally, but, as this study demonstrates, when women hold political power, government policies, agendas, and priorities can shift to reflect issues of concern for women constituents. We owe it to women in government and their constituents, male and female, to better understand the impacts of the power representation of women in government.

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