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Quality of Government and Women´s Representation
- Mapping out the Theoretical Terrain -

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Introduction

Is an increase in the number of women on leading positions a "quick fix" to reduced corruption? The question posed is a central issue within contemporary international research as well as within discussions on concrete anticorruption policies for severely hit countries. The police force in Mexico City is one example where the gender strategy (increase in the number of women) has been used with initially good results.

Even though the question above is formulated in a simple, straight forward manner, the research agenda in the project on Gender Equality and Quality of Government (QoG) – where I am the principal investigator – is complex. First of all gender is taken into account in the search for good *explanations* to variations between countries concerning QoG. In a study published in 1999, David Dollar and colleagues presented evidence for a relationship between the number of women in parliament and the level of corruption; the higher the number of women the lower the level of corruption. However, the causal direction of the relationship has been contested and an alternative model highlightening the importance of a "fair system" instead of a "fair sex" has been put forward. The dispute is far from solved and a major task is to sort out what role, if any, gender actually plays. Based on the findings of previous research I would say that the expected results has less to do with clear cut yes or no answers, than with specifications of the circumstances under which gender is more or less relevant.

Secondly gender is important in the search for *effects* of QoG. It is well known that corruption causes particular harm to poor sections of the population. Women, who make up the majority of the poor, are thus generally more severely affected than men by dysfunctional governments. A preliminary analysis of the data collected in the project so far, reveals that gender equality among the citizenry is related to QoG; the higher the level of QoG the higher the level of equality. However, a high number of women in parliament also seem to have a positive effect. Once again QoG and gender equality among decision-makers can be seen as two potentially competing factors, but also in this part the expectations on the results can be formulated in terms of specifications of the circumstances under which gender is more or less relevant, rather than in terms of clear cut yes or no answers.

What I will do in this paper is to map out the theoretical terrain regarding potential explanations.[1] What we have at hand is two discourses that seldom meet; the discourse on

[1] The question of effects will be developed at a later stage of the project.

women's descriptive representation[2] and the discourse on corruption/good governance. I agree with Anne Marie Goetz when she states that:

> Very little of the feminist literature on women in politics and bureaucracies has focused upon women's reaction to and engagement in corruption. The obvious reason for this is that it is extremely difficult to research. (Goetz 2007, 92)

It is fair to criticise the literature on women's representation for not taking corruption into account. The attempts made from the perspective of corruption/good governance to understand variances in the number of women elected tend, on the other hand, to be rather limited; only taking a few other variables than corruption into account. This paper will proceed as following: First I will give an overview regarding current research on women's representation. Then I will present research trying to integrate corruption/good governance as an explanation for variations in the number of women elected. The paper ends with the presentation of a framework where I suggest a way to sort out relevant variables through the distinction between macro-, meso- and micro-level explanations.

Causes behind the Number of Women Elected

There is at present a global trend with an increase in the number of women elected. In 1997 the world average for the number of women in national parliaments was 11.7 percent. In 2007 the corresponding figure was 17.3 percent (an increase of 5.6 percentage points). However, the trend is even better captured if one instead of comparing world averages compares the number of countries where women make up a significant part among elected representatives. There are at present three countries, Rwanda, Sweden and Finland, where women make up more than 40 percent of the members in the national parliament. All together there are 17 countries in the world where women make up more than 30 percent. (Situation as of 30 June 2007 www.ipu.org.) Ten years ago, the corresponding figures show only one country – Sweden – where women made up more than 40 percent and five countries where women made up more than 30 percent. (Figures from Inter-Parliamentary Union Report No 28 1997.)

An important background fact here is that women, historically, have been excluded from political participation on the basis of their sex. Gender equality regarding the right to vote and stand for election has not *automatically* meant gender equality regarding seats in parliament.

[2] In the literature on women's representation a distinction is often made between descriptive and substantive representation of women. Descriptive representation refers to numerical/quantitative aspects and substantive representation to qualitative aspects/aspects of content.

The situation in Western Europe can serve as an example here. The first country where women had the right to vote and stand for election was Finland in 1906. By the end of the Second World War, 1945, these rights were implemented throughout the region, with a few noticeable exceptions like Switzerland where this was not fully implemented until 1971. However, after more than six decades with formal political rights for women about four out of five members in national parliaments in Western Europe are, on average, men. In her influential book *The Politics of Presence* Anne Phillips draws attention to the male dominance:

> There are particular needs, interests and concerns that arise from women's experience, and these will be inadequately addressed in a politics that is dominated by men. Equal rights to a vote have not proved strong enough to deal with this problem; there must also be equality among those elected to office. (Phillips 1995, 66)

The assumption that the share of seats in parliament is essential for political inclusion is central to studies of causes behind the increased number of women elected. However, in contrast to the literature on outcomes of that change, these studies do seldom explicitly discuss the particular "needs, interest and concerns" that arise from women's experience. Numerical aspects are in focus in this strand of research.

It was stated earlier that there is at present a global trend with an increase in the number of women elected. What could be focused instead of increases are the *variances* that exist over time and between countries. Rwanda, Sweden and Finland were mentioned as examples of countries with a high number of women, more than 40 percent, in the national parliaments. At the other end of the spectrum well-established democracies like the United States, 16.3 percent, and Ireland, 13.3 percent, are to be found. If one looks at regions instead of specific countries the following picture emerges: the Nordic countries 41.7 percent women in national parliaments; the Americas 20.0 percent; Europe (excluding Nordic countries) 17.7 percent; Sub-Saharan Africa 16.8 percent; Asia 16.5 percent; Pacific 12.4 percent, and Arab States 9.5 percent. (Situations as of June 30 2007 www.ipu.org.)

A recent worldwide quota-trend makes conventional wisdom regarding explanations for variations partly outdated. However, it is still valid to review more established explanatory factors and discuss their strengths. Quotas for women are shaped in rather different forms and

they are not always that decisive. The following overview starts with a focus on parliamentary recruitment in Western Democracies. The perspective is thereafter widened.

Parliamentary Recruitment in Western Democracies

Pippa Norris (1993, 311) has worked out a model of parliamentary recruitment in Western Democracies putting emphasis on the political system, the party context, and supply and demand factors in the recruitment process. Norris' model is not to be seen as an explanatory model, understood in a strict sense, but is rather to be likened to an organizational scheme where relevant factors are named and sorted out. Important factors included under the label *political system* are electoral system, party system and legislative competition. Factors included under the label *party context* are party ideology and party organization. The picture of *the recruitment process* includes social background as a determinant for required resources to become a Member of Parliament as well as for motivation. Resources and motivation are then described as decisive for who gets into the pool of eligibles. Further hindrances to pass before one gets elected are then the judgements of gatekeepers and voters. The scheme also indicates that the outcome of the election has a feedback effect on motivation; if women are few or elected only occasionally this might enforce the idea that politics is "a man's game" (see Norris 1997 for a slightly modified model).

One of the most stable results, underpinned by empirical research, is that the election of women is favoured by electoral systems with party lists, proportional representation and large district magnitudes. The conventional wisdom used to be that these systems are less competitive than majority systems based on single-member districts. In a single-member system a woman has to be the number one for her party in order to take part in the race. In a system of proportional representation with large district magnitudes, a woman can be placed further down on the party list and still become elected. A part of the perceived wisdom, however, is also that proportional representation tends to favour party systems with a large number of parties and also mean greater possibilities for new parties to enter the parliamentary arena. In this sense a PR-system is very competitive. Empirical studies show that once a party pick up the issue of gender equality, and makes the increased election of women an issue, other parties within the same system tend to follow suit. This logic can partly be explained by policy-diffusion, a wish to pick up new ideas, and partly by strategic considerations. Parties are striving for power and gender equality is one weapon, among others, that can be used in electoral competition. (For research in this field see Caul 1999;

Duverger 1955; Lovenduski & Norris 1993; Matland & Brown 1992; Matland 1993; Rule 1981, 1987.)

The political system is a relevant factor in cross-national studies. However, what cross-national studies tend to miss are variations in the number of women elected between parties within one and the same system. It has been pointed out that the proportion of women to men is even greater across parties than across nations. One of the earliest findings in the field of party context was that leftist ideology is a strong predictor for a high number of women elected. However, this pattern is no longer as strong as it used to be. Substantial increases are currently to be found in most party families in Western Democracies, even though religious and ultra-right parties still tend to have very few women elected (Kittilson 2006; Lovenduski & Norris 1993; Norris & Lovenduski 1995). Miki Caul Kittilson (2006, 48) has distinguished between an "old left" and "new left" political ideology and her analyses show that new left ideology is a decisive factor in cross-party, cross-national, comparative analysis. Parties that value environment over growth and are pro-permissive in social policy tend to have more women elected. Apart from party ideology party organization is a factor discussed in connection with the party context. A centralized organization is favourable for women, but even more important is that the party organization has ties with organizations outside the party, since this provides more points of access for women (ibid, 48-49).

To get women elected, it is, of course, necessary that women are willing to stand as candidates. However, recent studies show that the picture of a smooth process in which higher numbers of women in the pool of eligbles "spill over" to higher numbers among elected representatives is not true. In Western Democracies the number of women elected has, in many cases, not grown in any strict incremental fashion but, as Kittilson (2006, 10) points out, rather in "punctuated and sometimes dramatic increases." This finding puts internal process within parties, the main gate-keeper in the recruitment process, at the centre of the analysis (see also Maier & Klausen 2001; Studlar & McAllister 2002). In recent studies *calculated efforts* made by party leadership in a top-down fashion are pointed out as one of the most important determinants of the number of women elected (Freidenvall 2006; Kittilson 2006; Wängnerud 2002).

What is evident in the literature on causes behind the number of women in parliaments is, at least as long as Western Democracies are discussed, a shift from system-oriented towards

strategy-oriented explanatory models. Strategy-oriented explanatory models tend to "dig" into processes endogenous to parties, whereas system-oriented explanatory models tend to "dig" into processes exogenous to parties. This shift does not mean that the scheme over parliamentary recruitment, worked out by Pippa Norris, has become obsolete; it still serves as a good overview and spell out factors that are important to take into account. However, in order to receive a more thorough picture, different layers or steps in the process have to be developed more fully. *Timing* and *framing* are examples of two concepts used in strategy-oriented research in order to capture the mechanisms at work more closely. The strategy-oriented strand of research also points to the importance of actions taken by women themselves, often in a joint venture between women's movements and women at higher ranks within the party structures. Timing and framing can be said to be about how these actions are received within party machineries; if the time is "right" and the packaging "appetizing", quests for increased gender equality will have a fairly good chance to gain support (Kittilson 2006, 10; see also Lovenduski & Norris ed. 1993; Wängnerud 2000).

Going World-Wide

The cultural explanation has been left out in the discussion above. Ever since cross-national studies concerning women in parliaments started, regional differences have, however, been a recurrent result. The high percentage within the Nordic region (41.7 percent) is exceptional, and even more remarkable is that within this region the number of women elected has been high for quite a long period of time. Already in the 1980s the expression *Norden – the passion for equality* was coined (Graubard ed. 1986; see also Norris 1996, 201). What this expression alludes to is feelings deeply embedded in society. Gender culture can be defined as societal ideals, meanings and values that have gender connotations (Phau-Effinger 1998). In the book *Rising Tide: Gender equality and Cutural Change Around the World* Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart emphasis the importance of a gender equality culture for women's possibilities to upward mobility:

> Where a culture of gender equality predominates, it provides a climate where de jure legal rights are more likely to be translated into de facto rights in practice; where institutional reforms are implemented in the workplace and public sphere; where women embrace expanded opportunities to attain literacy, education and employment; and where the traditional roles of women and men are transformed within the household and family. (Inglehart & Norris 2003, 8)

The opposite of a gender equality culture is a culture where traditional gender values prevail. Inglehart and Norris construct a gender equality scale from measurements on attitudes among citizens regarding women as political leaders, women's professional and educational rights, and women's traditional role as a mother. The gender equality scale correlates with the number of women in parliament. Inglehart and Norris (2003, 3) conclude: "that cultural tradition are remarkably enduring in shaping men's and women's worldviews."

Inglehart and Norris are not the first to emphasize culture as important, and the major contribution of their book is the vast empirical data they provide, covering almost all parts of the world. The cultural explanation has been criticized for being unable to capture short-term change. It has also been criticized for being almost a tautology (Sainsbury 1993; Rosenbluth, Salmond & Thies 2006, 172). However, since regional differences are persistent and do not disappear when other factors are included into the analysis, cultural explanations seem hard to ignore.

There is a pattern that other factors stand out in world-wide comparisons on women in parliaments than in more geographically restricted analyses (Kenworthy & Maloni 1999; Matland 1998; Salmond 2006). The time-perspective used is also important. In a world-wide analysis of the number of women elected covering the post-war period, 1950-2005, it is shown that until the fall of the Berlin Wall, 1989, the year introducing female suffrage and the appearance of communist regimes are among the most decisive factors (Wide 2006). The communist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe practiced a system of gender quotas. In a recent study Elin Bjarnegård (2006) notices an interesting curve-linearity; countries with low levels of democracy tend to have more women elected than do semi-democratic countries. It is also important to note that socio-economy tends to show up as a decisive factor when economically less developed countries are included in analyses.

The Recent Quota-Trend

Gender quotas are generally understood as formalised measures with the specific aim to increase the number of women elected. Calculations show that currently (2005) there are 40 countries in the world where gender quotas in elections to national parliaments are implemented by means of constitutional amendment or by changing the electoral laws; these are *legal quotas*. In another 50 countries major political parties have set out quota provisions in their own statutes; these are *party quotas*.

In the book *Women, Quotas and Politics,* Drude Dahlerup et al (2006) analyses the recent post-communism quota trend (for research on gender quotas see also Baldez 2006; Caul 2001; Krook 2006a, 2006b; Nanivadekar 2006). The origins can be traced to Norway in the beginning of the 1970s, when the Socialist Left Party implemented gender quotas regarding seats in internal party settings, like the party board, as well as regarding external party candidate lists. However, what many observers points out is that it was the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995, that sparked off changes. The use of gender quotas is becoming especially frequent in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Dahlerup and colleagues emphasizes an international contagion effect as important for the spread. For some countries the implementation of quotas reflects a wish to appear "modern" in the international community. A reflection is made that the inclusion of women, through formalised quotas, might foremost be symbolic. However, what is noticed is that women's movements, on the national as well as the international level, also have the possibility to play "the quota card" to further their interests (Dahlerup et al 2006).

What is important to highlight is that a special kind of historical "leaps" currently are taking place in many economically less developed countries. As cited earlier Kittilson states that "dramatic" increases are also a part of the story in Western Democracies. But what can be found in other parts of the world is an even stronger *divergence* between changes in the number of women elected and changes in the status of women in society more generally.

Dahlerup et al (2006) distinguishes between "fast track" and "incremental" models regarding the number of women elected; however there exist no clear boundaries here. Whether developments taking place are to be seen as fast or not is a matter of reference points. However, if the development in for example Sweden is contrasted to the development in Rwanda differences in models are striking. Already in the beginning of the 1970s parties in Sweden started to implement certain measures, often referred to as soft quotas, in order to increase the number of women elected. During the 1970s the threshold of 20 percent women in parliament was passed in Sweden; during the 1980s the threshold of 30 percent was passed and during the 1990s the threshold of 40 percent. This step-by-step development, taking place over almost four decades, lies behind the current figure of 47.3 percent women in the Swedish parliament. Whereas Sweden's twentieth century history is characterized by political stability,

economic growth and peace, Rwanda's situation is to be one of the poorest countries in the world and its modern history contains disastrous wars. Gender quotas have been implemented in Rwanda as a part of the reconciliation process after the genocide that ended in 1994. In 1994 there were 17.1 percent women in the national parliament in Rwanda. After the election 2003 the number was 48.8 percent. The number of women trebled in less than ten years.

Further Explanatory Factors

There are additional factors discussed in the literature regarding causes behind the increased number of women in parliaments. Included in this overview is a selection of factors that are both convincingly under-pinned and commonly used. A restriction has also been made to factors discussed in connection to national parliaments' lower or single houses (for research on sub-national legislatures see Oxley & Fox 2004; Vengrott, Nyiri & Fugiero 2003). Before ending this overview I will, however, draw attention to three more factors: constitutional engineering, the expansion of the welfare state and the micro-level processes at work in the elections to parliament. These factors are not yet firmly included into the research canon, but recent studies show interesting empirical results and shed new light to the processes at work.

So far, constitutional engineering has foremost been discussed in terms of electoral system. In the article *Political Citizenship and Democratization: The Gender Paradox* Eileen McDonagh (2002) do however enrich this perspective by analysing monarchical rules and whether the government is built on the affirmation, in the constitution, of individual equality or group differences. The results show that monarchies open to women, combined with competitive electoral and parliamentary systems, have a greater positive influence on women's election to national parliaments than do such electoral features alone. The mechanism at work here is that monarchies open to women can provide an example of political rule as: "not only a "man's game" but also a "woman's game"" (McDonagh 2002, 538). The results also show that it is favourable for the election of women when the government is founded on the assertion of women's equality to men as individuals *as well as* the assertion of their maternal group difference; that is when nations make care-work and welfare provision an affirmative duty of the state.

"Sameness" versus "difference" is a much debated distinction within feminist research (Bock & James ed. 1992, presents an overview). McDonagh's results refute the existence of a contradiction between these two principles. She points out that current discussions on culture

and values tend to be too one-dimensional, putting liberal and traditional values at different ends. McDonagh states that it is the combination of both that facilitates women's political citizenship.

In the article *Welfare Works: Explaining Female Legislative Representation,* Frances Rosenbluth, Rob Salmond and Michael Thies (2006) provide a picture of the mechanisms at work when the expansion of the welfare state facilitates women's entry into politics. Nordic/Scandinavian exceptionalism is used as a starting point. The Nordic region is not only characterized by its high proportion of women elected but also by its encompassing "cradle-to-grave" welfare state, in contrast to for example the "safety net" solutions used in states like the USA and Japan. The key link that resides in the Nordic type of welfare state is presented in three steps: welfare state policies (i) free women to enter paid workforce (ii) provide public sector jobs that disproportionately employ women and (iii) change the political interest of working women enough to create an ideological gender gap (see also Bergqvist et al. 1999; Hernes 1997; Sainsbury 1994; Siim 1991).

The results in the empirical analyses from Rosenbluth, Salmond and Thies (2006) show that increases in government expenditure (military spendings excluded) are consistently associated with increases in the number of women elected, and the results hold when controlled for factors like left ideology and female labor force participation. The conclusion is that women have benefited more than men from the development of encompassing welfare policies. In short, women's employment seems to create both the motive and the opportunity for women to enter politics. However, the parties are still gate-keepers in the recruitment process. Increasing the number of female candidates is described by Rosenbluth and colleagues as a "fruitful" step for a party to take in order to "exploit" the gender gap created by a new set of preferences. The other, darker, side of the coin is that the result implies that retrenchments of the welfare state can have a negative effect on the number of women elected.

There is a strand of research investigating gender differences among voters which sometimes, but far from always, relate to research on gender differences among elected representatives. An important finding from time series approaches is that gender differences among the citizenry tend to be pervasive: they exist outside the context of specific elections or issues (Box-Steffensmeier, de Boef & Lin 2004). At the same time the dynamics of a specific election – whether high-profiled women take part and/or women's issues are high on the

agenda – affect these differences or gender gaps (Cutler 2002; Dolan 2005; Koch 2002; Ondercin & Bernstein 2007).

There is some evidence that female voters are more supportive of female politicians than their male counterparts (Banducci & Karp 2000). However, there is also evidence that support the description of the parties, not the voters, as the main gate-keeper. Once women are put on the lists and run on conditions equal to men, they seem to have about the same chance to win (Wängnerud 1999). It is interesting to note findings saying that female voters tend to overestimate the actual number of women in parliamentary positions to a larger extent than male voters. If the knowledge was more accurate, the issue of gender equality in parliament would perhaps be more strongly prioritized (Sanbonmatsu 2003). In a cross-national analysis of candidate gender as an information shortcut in elections Melody Ellis Valdini (2005) presents evidence that when there has been recent corruption in government, the gendered shortcut that women are "honest outsiders" is positive for women candidates, and thus representation increases accordingly. Countries included in Valdini's analyses are Western Democracies.

Corruption/Good Governance as an Explanation for the Number of Women Elected

It was the article *Are women really the "fairer" sex? Corruption and women in government* published in 1999 by David Dollar and colleagues at the Development Research Group, the World Bank, which sparked off the discussion on the impact of gender in anticorruption. The conclusion of their study was that:

> [T]there may be extremely important spinoffs stemming from increasing female representation: if women are less likely than men to behave opportunistically, then bringing more women into government may have significant benefits for society in general. (Dollar et al 1999, 427)

Dollar et al build their study upon the assumption that women are more honest than men, this assumption was never tested but underpinned by results from previous research findings pointing in the direction that women, for example, are more likely to exhibit "helping" behaviour and vote based on social concerns to a larger extent than men (Eagly & Crowley 1986; Goertzel 1983). What Dollar and colleagues found in a large cross-country study was that the presence of female parliamentarians has a significant, negative effect on corruption even when other factors such as overall level of social and economic development, political

and civil freedom, average years of schooling, and ethnic fractionalization are taken into account.

The findings from the group around Dollar was basically confirmed by the study *Gender and Corruption* from Anand Swamy and colleagues, published in Journal of Development Economics in 2001. What the study from Swamy et al added was empirical evidence from the World Value Surveys showing that women are less involved in bribery, and are less likely to condone bribe-taking than men. They also added more measurements on women's influence when they did cross-country studies similar to the once conducted by Dollar et al. Beside women in parliament the group around Swamy also included measures on women government ministers and women in labor force. The study also added some new control variables and whereas Dollar et al used the International Country Risk Guide Corruption Index as the dependent variable, Swamy et al used the Transparency Internationals Corruption Perceptions Index. Swamy et al also added knowledge regarding correlations between the changes in women's participation and the extent of corruption within countries over time. The group around Swamy do not hesitate when they draw their conclusions:

> We are making a simple point: to question the central findings of this paper, one needs to argue that the results of careful analyses of several distinct data sets have, by sheer fluke, all been biased in the same direction. Our conclusion, that there is indeed a gender differential in tolerance for corruption is more plausible. (Swamy et al. 2001, 25)

I will not go through the critique that has emerged in detail. However, some of the major points concern the possibility of reversed causality; the lack of preciseness in the core variables and the need for more elaborated panel analyses. Hung-En Sung (2003) suggests that it is the strengths of liberal democracy that should be highlighted instead of the number of women in influential positions: "…gender equality and government accountability are both great achievements of modern liberal democracy." Sung's conclusion is that the relationships presented in earlier studies are spurious (for a similar line of reasoning see Bjarnegård 2006, 2007; Goetz 2007).

What everyone seems to agree upon is that the number of women in leading positions (political as well as bureaucratic) within a society is a useful "proxy" for good governance. The correlations as such are not questioned and they turn up when different measures of

corruption/good governance are used. However, the mechanisms at work here are simply not investigated in a totally satisfactory way.

The work of Elin Bjarnegård (2006, 2007) should be mentioned as a recent example of research trying to connect the different discourses or research programs presented here. She makes the point that the more corrupt the road to political power is, the more it will benefit those already in power. In most countries this means up-holding a heavy male dominance. Bjarnegårds focuses is on political corruption, e.g. vote buying and clientilism/nepotism.

There are two important conclusions to be drawn from Bjarnegårds work: First of all, she empirically under-pins the reverse causal direction suggested by Hung-En Sung. It is the corruption level that influences who gets selected and not the other way around. Secondly, Bjarnegårds findings contribute to strengthen a net-work hypothesis put forward in the literature. What this hypotheses suggests is that one should divide between persons (men or women) included or not in "old-boys-networks", where corruption is part of the game. Gender has only an *indirect* effect. In one of her case-studies, conducted in Thailand, Bjarnegård finds that in order to break the vicious circle women are caught in regarding political influence; women have formed their own net-works. The vote base of these female networks differs in comparison to the male-dominated networks, but the organizational structure tends to follow the same clientelist logic.

A Framework for Further Analysis

What I plan for in this project is to rather soon start with empirical cross-country studies using the QoG dataset. I want to know if the disputes going on regarding gender equality and corruption/good governance are related to methodological artefacts, e.g. that different scholars design their studies in different ways, or if there are substantial points than can be made if one for example break down the material and look at different contexts. One obvious problem here is the tendency that different researchers use different definitions of corruption and good governance. So far, I have not seen the QoG concept of "impartial political institutions" included into the gender analysis. The best way for me to go ahead must be to use a broad set of indicators.

The overview presented in this paper show that there is a reasonable amount of previous research to connect to in this area, and a theoretical goal for the future research is to "tune up"

or sharpen the analyses. This ambition to tune up explanations related to QoG and women's representation should not be seen as an ambition on a low level. The disputes in this field are, as pointed out earlier, far from solved, and the theoretical terrain is rather "bushy". Another important remark concerns the tendency for gender research to form a research strand of its own; to be rather isolated from other strands of research. The ambition in this project is not only to connect two different gendered discourses, but also to handle the gender factor in a way that makes "main stream" research seriously interested.

The main point in this paper is that the body of literature on explanations for variations in women's representation throughout the world could be far more exploited than has been the case so far in QoG-related studies. I have not reached the point where I am able to present a genuinely explanatory model; however, an important step is to start sorting out relevant variables. In the following figure, Figure 1, I present a framework that distinguishes between macro-, meso- and micro-level explanations.

Figure 1. A Framework for analysing QoG and Women's Representation

	Variables drawn from research on Women's Representation	**Variables drawn from research on Quality of Government**
Macro-level variables	Level of democracy Year of female suffrage Gender equality culture Electoral system Monarchical rules Affirmation of group/individual rights in the constitution Legal gender quotas Government (non-military) expenditure Socio-economy Contagion effects	Level of corruption - International Country Risk Guide Corruption Index - Transparency Internationals Corruption Perceptions Index QoG: Impartial Political Institutions
Meso-level variables	Party ideology Party organization Party gender quotas (or other forms of calculated efforts) Contagion effects Women's movement Timing and framing	Nepotism/clientilism within parties Vote-buying
Micro-level variables	Dynamics in specific elections Voter preferences Psychology (how politics in general is perceived)	Gendered short-cuts for voting behaviour (women "honest" outsiders)

From the presentation above follows that women's representation – understood as numbers of women in national parliament – is seen as the main dependent variable. This way of reasoning is in line with the results from Sung, Bjarnegård and Goetz. However, the suggested order of

the causal relationship between QoG-related indicators and women's representation is not to be taken for granted. Alternative explanatory models will also be tried out.

The planned cross-country Large-N study will be supplemented with in depth studies in a smaller number of carefully selected countries. These in depth studies are planned to encompass panel-analyses and personal interviews. Even though there are problems with getting people to talk about non-acceptable behaviour personal, so called long interviews, are extremely helpful in elaborating new hypotheses or a richer understanding of the phenomena at hand. The qualitative approach is of special importance for the ambition to take research one step further regarding the understanding of what the category "gender" really entails. Why do gender matter in this field? Is gender the only social background variable that matters or is it possible to trace similar patterns regarding ethnicity, age and class? I am not sure yet to what extent it is possible to integrate also other social categories into the analyses; however the critique from diversity feminism, highlightening differences between women (and between men) has to be taken seriously.

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