September 2021

Women's Civic and Political Participation in the Developing World: Obstacles and Opportunities

Sharon F. Lean

Stine Eckert

Kyu-Nahm Jun

Nicole Gerring

Matthew Lacouture

See next page for additional authors

Recommended Citation

Women's Civic and Political Participation in the Developing World: Obstacles and Opportunities

Authors

Sharon F. Lean, Stine Eckert, Kyu-Nahm Jun, Nicole Gerring, Matthew Lacouture, Juan Liu, and Amanda Lauren Walter

Women's Civic and Political Participation in the Developing World: Obstacles and Opportunities[1]

By Sharon F. Lean[2], Stine Eckert[3], Kyu-Nahm Jun[4], Nicole Gerring[5], Matthew Lacouture[6], Juan Liu[7], Amanda Lauren Walter[8]

Abstract

This article provides a multidisciplinary overview and synthesis of recent scholarship on strategies to increase women's civic and political participation in the developing world. Using a systematic method for meta-analysis, we identify points of consensus in the literature as well as debates and gaps where future research on strengthening women's participation is needed. Strategies to increase women's civic and political participation that emerge in the literature include: establishing quotas to enhance women's representation; using social media platforms to mobilize women and amplify their voices; implementing policies and programs that target women as

---

[1] This article and the related RKM were developed with support from the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the sole responsibility of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID; the United States government; or the Democracy Fellows and Grants Program implementer, IIE. The original report can be found here: https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Publications/DFG-WSU-Publication. The authors gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Wayne State University research librarians Judith Arnold, Cynthia Krolikowski, and Damecia Donahue, who assisted in the systematic identification of literature that is the basis of this research.

[2] Sharon F. Lean is Associate Professor and Graduate Director in the Department of Political Science at Wayne State University. Her current research examines the role of civic associations and autonomous public agencies of the state in advancing democratic governance in Latin America. She is the author *of Civil Society and Electoral Accountability in Latin America* (Palgrave Macmillan 2012).

[3] Stine Eckert is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at Wayne State University. Her research focuses on the intersection of media, gender, and minorities as well as the democratic potential of new media and counter-publics. She is co-PI on the NSF ADVANCE grant WSU-GEARS (Gender Equity Advances Retention in STEM).

[4] Kyu-Nahm Jun is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and Director of the Master of Public Administration program at Wayne State University. Her current research focuses on examining public participation and democratic governance in cities amidst fiscal crisis and austerity.

[5] Nicole Gerring, Ph.D. is the Project Director for Wayne State University's GEARS program, a National Science Foundation ADVANCE grant. In 2020 she was a Visiting Research Fellow at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, studying the role of women's civil society in promoting sustainable peace.

[6] Matthew Lacouture is a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at Wayne State University. His dissertation, supported by a Fulbright Grant, utilizes comparative and interview-based methods to analyze workers' and popular protest movements in Jordan. His research has been published in the *International Review of Social History*.

[7] Juan Liu is Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at Columbus State University. Her research explores how new and legacy media affect individuals' political participation and the strategic use of social media in public relations campaigns. Her research has been published in *New Media & Society and Mass Communication and Society*.

[8] Amanda Lauren Walter is a Lecturer of History at Towson University. Her research focuses on 20th century U.S. women's history and labor history. Her research has been published in the *Journal of Labor and Society and Labour History*.

participants or beneficiaries; and mobilizing women through their intersecting identities. We discuss the opportunities inherent in these strategies, as well as their limits. A secondary goal of this article is to provide a useful guide to recent English language literature on women's civic and political participation for an international women's studies audience. The article includes a link to our Rapid Knowledge Map (RKM, a searchable excel file) that summarizes information about the over 400 studies that we reviewed using an adapted version of the Cochrane method. We hope this resource will be of use to other scholars.

Key Words: Women, Political participation, Civic participation, Developing world, Cochrane method, Rapid Knowledge Map

Introduction

Women's civic and political empowerment matters for democracy and development. Gender, and here specifically the collective of women, represents an important category for analyzing socio-political structures. The present review provides a multidisciplinary overview and synthesis of current scholarship on strategies to increase women's civic and political participation. We believe that this review, and the accompanying Rapid Knowledge Map (RKM) of English-language literature, will be useful to the international community of scholars and development practitioners interested in advancing women's participation worldwide.

The first section of the article explains our methods and the online RKM resource that accompanies this article.[9] The remainder of the article summarizes our findings into two sections: first, a summary from the literature about the determinants of the gender gap in women's civic and political participation, and second, what the literature reveals about various policies or strategies that can increase women's civic and political participation.

Methods and Data

We conducted a meta-analysis of relevant literature using elements of the rigorous, multi-step Cochrane method for systematic review and evidence synthesis (Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Review of Interventions 2011). The main benefit of the meta-analysis method is that it frees the researcher from making *a priori* assumptions about the subject matter. Thus, we do not start from an assumption that we know the causes of the gender gap or the strategies that should be used to address it. Rather, we scrutinize a large body of English-language scholarly work to see what scholars representing diverse academic disciplines have identified as important.

For the literature search, we employed a two-step strategy. First, we developed a comprehensive list of terms for keyword searches relating to women's civic and political participation. With the aid of university reference librarians specializing in political science, history, communication studies and gender studies we conducted systematic searches of sixteen selected indices to identify works with combinations of the selected keywords in the title or abstract, limited to regions of interest and a publication date from 1990 to 2016.[10] Second, we used

---

our collective expertise to identify additional works. For disciplinary areas and emergent strategies not found in large quantities during the original search, we searched again with terms tailored to enlarge the number of studies. Additionally, we included studies we were familiar with that did not come up during the formalized database searches.

This search produced a pool of 503 works. We eliminated 91 works that did not focus on developing regions, were off-topic, not evidence-based, or written in languages other than English.[11] This left 412 works including peer-reviewed journal articles (82% of the sample); grey literature reports (13%); and dissertations, books, book chapters, and media reports (5%). The 412 works were from journals and other outlets spanning multiple academic disciplines, but predominantly political science (30%), followed by area studies (14%), interdisciplinary studies (14%), gender studies (12%), development studies (9%), anthropology (7%) and sociology (6%) with small percentages totaling 8% across a range of fields including communications, economics, history, law and others. Qualitative methods predominated (60%), and many works were case studies (55%). Regional distribution of research was surprisingly even (Asia 26%, Sub Saharan Africa 23.5%, Latin America 21%, Middle East and North Africa 16%), although relatively few works covered Eurasia (just 3%). Some works were global in scope. A majority of works studied women's political participation (53%), with 19% focusing on civic participation, while 26% considered both civic and political participation.

Following principles of the Cochrane method allowed us to assert that these characteristics reflect trends in the overall English language literature, though we acknowledge the influence of our selection of search terms, characteristics of the search engines of each database or index, and the search strategies. As one research librarian involved in the project noted, "searching is an art, not a science."

The complete set of 412 articles and coding are summarized in a large excel sheet called a Rapid Knowledge map (RKM). The RKM includes a row for each of the 412 articles, and columns with detailed information on each publication reviewed including: author/year, article/report type, disciplinary area of journal/source, kind of women's participation, method-general, kind of qualitative method, kind of quantitative method, case study, program evaluation, sample size and unit of analysis, region of focus, country focus, topic addressed, category of women studied, research question, theory/framework/model used, findings on strategies page number, strategies summary, strategy, and practical implications. The flexible format of the RKM lets researchers search by keyword to find literature related to a particular aspect of women's participation (for example, "human rights" or "legislative") or sort by column (for example, to find all literature about a particular country or region). The RKM and codebook are available for download at https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/JPKCTN.

We established inter-coder reliability through practice coding exercises during regular weekly meetings with all team members. These exercises included an initial session in which all team members coded the same small sample of articles and then discussed inconsistencies, questions or grey areas that emerged. Next, we paired up team members to code additional samples

---

Information Service (PAIS), Political Abstracts, ProQuest Research Library, ProQuest Dissertations, Science Direct, Scopus, Sociological Abstracts, Sociology Connect, Summons, Web of Science, and Worldwide Political Science Abstracts (WPSA).

[11] Searches were conducted with English language keywords, but nevertheless turned up a number of articles in other languages with English language abstracts, particularly in Spanish and Portuguese. Team competencies included English, German, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish and basic Arabic, French and Portuguese. However, because the databases used for our search did not provide a comprehensive indexing of articles published in other languages, we elected to focus on the English language literature.

of articles, allowing us to reveal remaining inconsistencies and refine coding rules for clarity. After establishing inter-coder reliability in several such norming sessions, each study was coded by one team member to efficiently code all 412 studies. We then used the RKM to generate insights into larger trends in scholarly research on women's participation in civic and political processes by sorting along the categories for which we coded.

Before proceeding, it is worthwhile to address the question of what is counted as participation, understanding that in many contexts there may not be a bright line between civic and political forms of participation. At the outset of this study, we made some common sense assumptions about what civic (e.g., volunteerism, community service, non-profit or advocacy work) and political (e.g., voting, campaigning, running for office) participation might include. Beyond these cursory distinctions, we avoided developing an *a priori* taxonomy; choosing instead to let the literature speak for itself. Given that the research we surveyed covers a wide array of countries, contexts (including online), and activities, developing such a taxonomy would risk missing the very multiplicity of insights we set out to synthesize. Thus, we relied on each study to (explicitly or implicitly) provide its own definition – both for our coding of the RKM and in our analysis below. Generally speaking, the literature we reviewed identifies as political participation those activities most clearly associated with elections and representation as well as "less institutional" activities oriented towards directly influencing politics or policy (e.g., petitions, protests, armed conflict) (Coffé & Dilli 2015, 531). Civic participation, by contrast, includes being active in voluntary groups, such as community, social, educational, public health, women's and religious associations (Espinal & Zhao 2015). Often, there is not a bright line between civic and political engagement.

Understanding the Gender Gap in Participation

Because strategies to increase women's civic and political participation may build implicitly or explicitly on differential understanding of the reasons for the gender gap, before turning to what the literature reveals about how to strengthen women's civic and political participation, we first review what the literature tells us about the nature and theorized drivers of the gender gap in civic and political participation.

The existence of a gender gap in both civic and political participation has been well documented in studies of industrialized countries (Norris 2002, Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010) and more recently has also been investigated in the developing world (Desposato and Norrander 2009, Coffé and Dilli 2015). Espinal and Zhao (2015), for example, find significant gender gaps in both civic and political participation in Latin American countries, and Coffé and Bolzendahl's (2011) present evidence of a gender gap in participation for sub-Saharan African countries. Methodologically, a majority of studies on the gender gap rely on secondary data sources such as the regional barometer surveys or the World Values Survey, and use quantitative analysis. In this literature, we find two main categories of determinants of the gender gap: individual and contextual.

Individual Determinants

A large body of research examines how individual attitudes and characteristics contribute to the gender gap in participation. Tong (2003), for example, finds that, as a result of socialization, Chinese women respondents are more passive than men toward achievement, more accommodating in conflict situations, and have a higher preference for conflict mediation by

193

traditional authority. Other studies suggest how such socialization might be overcome, for example by elite cues–i.e., the transmission of messages regarding gender norms by opinion leaders or others who wield power and influence–that support the value of women's participation. Using the Latinobarómetro public opinion survey data, Morgan and Buice (2013) investigate factors that facilitate or undermine support for women in politics in Latin America. Their study finds that elite cues shape men's attitudes toward women in politics. Interestingly, they also find that citizens who distrust government tend to express higher support for women as candidates.

Another important individual determinant of the gender gap is socio-economic status (SES) and education. The relationship between SES and political participation is well-established in advanced industrialized democracies, not just in relation to women (Verba, Schlozman & Brady 1995). This relationship has support in the developing world, for women. For example, in China, Tong (2003) finds that higher SES women are more politically engaged than both lower SES women and men. Studying multiple countries in Latin America, Htun and Piscopo (2014) note that greater income and skills enable more women to run for and win national office. Similarly, some studies in our sample find that for women with lower education or for those who are unemployed, the gender gap worsens (Isaksson, Kotsadam & Nerman 2014). However, some research challenges the expected relationship between SES and women's participation. For example, Desposato and Narrander (2009) report that, in Latin America, education and SES have "non-gendered impacts with equal effects for men and women" (156). And Gleason (2001) finds that, in India, richer women are not, in fact, more likely to run for office than women with lesser means. Thus, education and socio-economic status appear to influence women's participation, but these effects may be similar for men, or subject to mitigation by other factors.

With regard to individual characteristics, several works examine how women's labor market participation affects women's participation. According to Arana and Santacruz (2005), Pachón, Peña, & Wills (2012), and Htun and Piscopo (2014), women in the workforce are more likely to participate in politics. Ross (2008), similarly, argues in oil-rich countries of the Middle East, women are left out of the labor force and therefore have fewer avenues through which to extend beyond the domestic sphere, are less empowered economically, and, consequently, are less likely to be empowered politically. However, other scholars find that labor force involvement may be negatively related to political participation (see Melkonian-Hoover's 2008 quantitative analysis of interview data from factory employees in Mexico). Gleason (2001), studying India, observes that where women have a higher labor force participation rate, there is a larger gender gap in voting and in running for office. Worthen (2015), studying Mexico, shows that the demands of labor force participation reduced the political participation of women in indigenous communities: indigenous women rejected local town council posts because they argued that it would increase their labor exploitation within the communal systems in which they live. Thus, employment and labor can have mixed effects on participation, particularly when participation creates a "triple load" (i.e., family duties, work duties, and civic duties).

Contextual Determinants

Other literature investigates the influence of contextual factors on the gender gap in participation. The level of existing descriptive representation – that is, the presence of women as office holders -- is one important contextual factor investigated in the literature. The "critical mass" hypothesis holds that once women occupy a sizable proportion of the legislature (commonly posited as 30% following the Dahlerup (1988) study on women in parliament in Scandinavia), women's presence will start to have a broader impact on the political process. Barnes and Burchard

194

(2012), using Afrobarometer data, find that women's descriptive representation matters: as the percentage of women in the national legislature increases, women are more likely to engage in politics. Similarly, Desposato and Norrander (2009) investigate a statistically significant gender gap in conventional and unconventional political participation in Latin America. They suggest that the presence of women office holders along with protection of civil liberties (both characteristics of the Costa Rican political context, where no statistically significant gender gap exists) do more to mitigate the gender gap in participation than other hypothesized forces such as economic development and modernization.

Many studies also investigate patriarchal culture as a source of resistance to changing gender norms, and, correspondingly, of the gender gap in participation (Jennings 1998). For instance, Guo, Zheng, and Yang (2009) examine participation in Chinese village elections and find that women have lower levels of participation even though there are no significant differences in political attitudes between men and women. They contend, "China's patriarchal system, embedded in various forms of mindset and political practice, continues to constrain rural women's political involvement in a substantial way" (145). Studies from Africa also show that societal gender norms, rather than individual characteristics, explain the majority of the gender gaps in political participation (Isaksson *et al*. 2014). Gottlieb (2016), studying Mali, attributes the lack of women's participation in civic information programs to "a deeply held asymmetric gender norm" associated with women's public sphere participation (102).

A third contextual factor is related to the global spread of norms and ideas. Coffé and Bolzendahl (2011) point to a process of cultural isomorphism that can trigger changes in the gender gap in participation. The cultural isomorphism thesis suggests that global ideas about women's political equality and participation can influence women's political participation worldwide. Mechanisms include norm diffusion, priorities of international donors, regional pressure from institutions such as the African Union, and the advocacy efforts of global women's rights movements. Drawing on data from the Afrobarometer surveys, Coffé and Bolzendahl (2011) find evidence that both modernization and cultural isomorphism processes are at play. Based on a global sample, Hughes, Krook and Paxton (2015), however, observe that "when international and domestic activists push highly controversial scripts simultaneously, governments may be more resistant to change, provoking recoiling effects instead of a seamless alignment with international standards" (370).

Finally, changes in the political opportunity structure—including political transitions, periods of armed conflict and struggle, political reforms (such as constitution reforms or changes to election law), or the creation of new political institutions or social programs—appear to alter opportunities and incentives for women's political and civic participation (see among others, Van Allen 2001, Rousseau 2011, Shehadeh 2011, Lemaitre 2015).

In sum, explanations from the literature for the gender gap in civic and political participation include individual determinants (individual attitudes, SES, education, labor market participation), and contextual determinants (presence of women as office holders, culture, global spread of norms, and political opportunities). For some of these determinants, specifically socio-economic status and labor market participation, there is mixed evidence about how these factors may drive the gender gap.

195

Strategies for Reducing the Gender Gap

The policies or strategies to increase women's civic and political participation that emerge most clearly in the literature can be classified into two broad categories: institutional strategies and activist-led strategies. The two main institutional strategies are 1) the use of quotas to enhance women's representation and 2) targeted public policies or social programs designed to enhance opportunities for women's participation and/or which single out women as beneficiaries. The activist or civil-society led strategies include: 1) the use of social media platforms to mobilize women and 2) mobilizing women's participation through their intersecting identities. Below, we summarize the findings, debates and gaps about these four strategies for increasing women's civic and political participation.

Institutional Strategies

Around 20% of the articles we reviewed dealt with the topic of gender quotas. There is consensus in the literature that gender quotas improve descriptive and symbolic representation—in other words, the number of women in elected office and their visibility in those positions increased when quotas were implemented (Franceschet, Krook & Piscopo 2012, Patnaik 2014, Lombardo and Meier 2016). Literature from Latin America (Jones 2009) and Africa (Britton 2002, Muriaas and Kayuni 2013) suggests that mandatory quotas are more effective than voluntary party quotas. However, descriptive and symbolic representation fostered by the use of quotas does not necessarily translate into substantive representation, and the assumption that it should has not been fully investigated. Studies that touch on substantive representation include Franceschet and Piscopo (2008), Htun, Lacalle and Micozzi (2013), Josefsson (2014), Piscopo (2015), and Benstead, Jamal and Lust (2015).

There is also a very interesting stream of literature on gender quotas for local office. Studies of India (Bryld 2001, Patnaik 2014), Jordan (Nanes 2015), Afghanistan (Beath, Christia & Enikolopov 2013) and Lesotho (Clayton 2014) suggest that quotas for women's representation in local office appear to have great potential to enhance women's participation (see also Costa 2010). However, both structural issues – a lack of governmental support for local village councils, for example – and other barriers including lack of education, household workloads and patriarchal culture, can still marginalize women's voices even when quotas succeed in increasing women's presence in local governance structures (see Vissandjee *et al*. 2005, Randall 2006, Cummins 2011, Zaman 2012, Wang and Dai 2013, among others).

Studies of gender quotas in elections also reveal evidence that when women participate in politics via quotas, they risk discrimination, friction with men in their surroundings, and higher workloads (See Franceschet and Piscopo 2008 on Argentina; Zetterberg 2008 on Mexico; Burnet 2011 on Rwanda; Bawa 2012 on Ghana). In some cases, they also face threats to their physical security (International Crisis Group 2013 on Afghanistan). These risks, combined with an uncertain likelihood that their participation will have positive policy outcomes that benefit women as a group, may discourage women's political participation even in the presence of quotas.

Adoption of gender quotas and their effects in branches of government other than the legislature are understudied and should be further examined. There are a number of case studies detailing women's rise to the presidency in different countries (Van Doorn-Harder 2002, Morales Quiroga 2008, Bauer 2009, Florez-Estrada 2010). But the question of gender representation in the judiciary, cabinet, civil service, and security forces in the developing world is largely understudied. An interesting article by Piscopo (2015) suggests that after the first quota laws for legislative office are passed, state institutionalization of gender rights may often extend to other areas. This is an

important finding that bears further research. Based on our review of the gender quota literature, we can conclude that gender quotas are an important strategy, but one that is perhaps best viewed as a first step towards reducing the gender gap in political participation.

Several articles we reviewed dealt with policies, processes or programs targeted for women (e.g., conditional cash transfer, participatory budgeting, mentor mother), such programs are generally run or mandated by the state, though they are sometimes carried out by non-governmental or international organizations. They are designed to involve citizens in aspects of governance or to improve the welfare of particular populations, sometimes on the condition that recipients participate in civic or health education programs or other community activities. This area includes literature on participatory public policies, such as participatory budgeting.

There is consensus in the literature that programs that target women can increase their participation. Pant and Standing (2011), for example, observe that a women's forum program in Nepal helped raise the status of women in the community. Alami *et al.* (2013) find that participation in a state-based women's health volunteer program in Iran enhanced women's agency. Kenny (2007) reports that a "mentor mother" program in South Africa helped local women gain greater independence.

However, the literature also highlights multiple limitations of social programs as a strategy for mobilizing women's civic or political participation—specifically, the risk that women will opt out because of the "triple load" of paid labor, household and parenting duties, and program participation such programs can create (see Gil-García 2016, Worthen 2015). Additionally, program participation may provoke social backlash that can become violent when women receive "special" benefits not available to men (see Corboz 2013 on effects of a conditional cash transfer program in Uruguay). Ogrodnik and Borzutzky (2011), writing about conditional cash transfer program in Guatemala, suggest that "the small sums of money distributed to the poor and the low investments in health and education within the country" are simply insufficient to reduce poverty among women and thereby empower them (63-64).

The literature also provides some policy recommendations. To overcome the backlash against women who participate in programs, program implementers should analyze the risks and incorporate strategies to mitigate negative outcomes for women. Ideally, steps to mitigate backlash or the problem of the "triple load" should be developed before the program is implemented. Concrete interventions such as dedicating funds for gender equality projects or creating an office to oversee gender inclusiveness, appear to help. McNulty (2015) reports that these types of interventions significantly enhanced women's participation in participatory budgeting in Peru (1439). Holvoet and Inberg (2014), report positive results of a gender responsive budgeting initiative in Mozambique: arguing that it can lead towards results-oriented, better-coordinated planning and budgeting.

Activist Strategies

The use of social media by women and feminists has emerged as a promising, strategic way to enhance women's civic and political participation, and in recent years the literature on social media and women's participation has begun to blossom. Several works document the use of social media to empower women and mobilize women's participation during the Arab Spring (Newsom and Lengal 2012, Odine 2013, Sreberny 2015, among others). Even when used outside the political sphere, the literature shows that access to online spaces such as literary blogs (Elsadda 2010) and discussion forums (Khamis 2011, 2010), can create important spaces for self-expression that empower women. Social media tools can also allow women candidates and politicians to

bypass mainstream media and appeal directly to voters (see Karan *et al*. 2009, on the GABRIELA party in the Philippines which successfully utilized YouTube and Friendster to mobilize support). And social media and online venues provide outlets to address violence against women (UN Broadband Commission 2015).

Yet despite the many encouraging examples, the literature does not portray social media and internet communications as easy or uncomplicated spaces for women's mobilization. Newsom and Lengal (2012), based on a study of women online activists in the Tunisian and Egyptian protests of 2010-11, conclude that while online activism is a powerful tool for women to gain a voice in the activist space, the masculine, western hegemony of the social media landscape imposes certain constraints. The ambivalence of online spaces is described as "contained empowerment," in which activists' communications function "within their initial social media and localized spaces but [lose] power as they are translated into the global stage" (32). Elsewhere, hashtag campaigns such as #IndiaNeedsFeminism and #BringBackOurGirls are a form of participation that can be used by women and feminists to reach a global audience, though there is a risk that the international publics that become engaged oversimplify and decontextualize local issues (Eagle 2015, Eckert and Steiner 2016).

And as with conventional information and communication technologies (ICTs), using social media also can increase the risk of online abuse of women, which can result in gender-specific electoral and political violence (Bardall 2013). Studies in the Western context document the emotional, professional and commercial harm that can result from online abuse (Ellison and Akdeniz 1998, Citron 2014, Duggan 2017). In addition, because of the digital divide in developing areas, and because digital activism may exclude older or differently-abled women (Schuster 2013), we can conclude from this review that social media are a double-edged sword for women's empowerment and participation. Future studies should empirically examine both the benefits and limitations of social media and online spaces to empower and mobilize women.

Finally, the literature reveals different ways in which women can be mobilized to participate through appeals to their intersecting identities. Women's various identities – as members of economic classes, ethnicities, religious groups, political parties, sexualities, marital status and other identity groups – affect women's mobilization and activism. The social movement literature shows that when organizations and movements frame issues around intersecting identities, this can expand participation (for instance, Huiskamp 2000, Franceschet, Piscopo & Thomas 2016, Pieper Mooney 2007)

For women's civic and political participation in the developing world, there is evidence in the literature that "motherhood" frames are used to mobilize women in civil society while mitigating risk (Huiskamp 2000, Franceschet, Piscopo & Thomas 2016). Pieper Mooney (2007) argues that women in Chile and Argentina successfully mobilized against authoritarian regimes in the 1970s and 1980s by invoking and redefining maternal obligation. Lemaitre and Sandvik (2005) report that internally displaced women in Colombia invoked their status as mothers for self-protection while also pursuing community action. Kutz-Flaemenbaum (2012) describes how Israeli women participating in a peace and human rights initiative that opposes the occupation of the West Bank (Machsom Watch) take advantage of a gendered political opportunity structure in which opportunities and constraints are different for men than women. In addition, studies also suggest that utilizing women's identity as "workers" may be effective in helping women to mobilize to alleviate adverse working conditions (see Mills 2008 on Thai labor activism and Acar 2010 on striking women workers in Turkey).

Political party identity can also help mobilize women to participate. Bedi (2006) provides a nuanced feminist exploration of the ways in which women in Mumbai, India were able to leverage their position as members of the right-wing Shiv Sena Party to assert themselves in the public sphere, gaining access to public services and expanding their horizon of autonomous action in a context of poverty, overarching patriarchal control, and political corruption. And Gervais (2010) shows how solidarity as victims of domestic and human rights abuses (cultivated during non-governmental human rights education workshops), enabled women in Honduras to mobilize around their shared experiences, which then translated into both increased assertiveness in the domestic sphere and political activism in the public sphere. Additionally, several works highlight the need to take the intersection of gender and ethnicity into account in order to create successful inclusive participation (see Marsden 2008, Pape 2008, Zanotti 2013).

Conclusions

Our systematic meta-analysis of the interdisciplinary literature on women's civic and political participation in the developing world reveals various individual and contextual correlates of gender gaps, and highlights four main areas of study related to strategies to increase women's participation. These include two main institutional strategies: the adoption of gender quotas and design of women-targeted social programs and two main activist strategies: the use of social media and online platforms and framing and fomenting women's participation around intersecting identities.

Reinforcing Gender Quotas

The adoption of gender quotas definitely increases the number of women in elected offices at the national and local levels, and can perhaps encourage women to participate more broadly. But, quotas alone do not guarantee improvements in women's participation. Studies to measure the quality of implementation after quota adoption are needed. Once women are in elected office via quotas, it remains unclear what substantive changes they bring. Voluntary quotas, and the intervening effects of political parties, also remain understudied. Further, quotas for gender equity in branches of the government other than the legislature are less common, and their implementation and effects are not well understood. Overall, though, there is suggestive evidence of a diffusion effect in which gender quotas are spreading both globally and within national and local institutions. Once gender quotas are implemented in the legislature, gender equity reforms become more likely in other institutional settings.

Making Targeted Programs Safe, Equitable, and Effective

Policies and programs that target women appear to be a promising strategy for empowering and mobilizing them. However, these programs almost always impose unanticipated costs, burdens, or risks on the women who participate, thereby creating a depressive effect on women's participation. The research in this area suggests that there are predictable patterns of adverse impact on women, which should be considered in the planning process of any social program that targets women as beneficiaries.

Social Media: Opportunities and Risks

Social media can provide a relatively inexpensive, accessible tool for women to participate in civic and political life. Women use social media to highlight issues that disproportionately affect

199

women such as gendered violence and to gain visibility outside traditional mainstream media among a potentially global audience with near instant dissemination. Yet, social media also have become a space in which women are contested, harassed, and silenced. Gender and social media, particularly as it pertains to the developing world, is an emerging area of research. There is a need for further study of the specific benefits from and challenges to social media for women users. More research on the way in which online participation translates into offline civic and political participation would also be welcome.

Mobilizing Intersecting Identities

Finally, the literature suggests that women can be encouraged to participate if they are mobilized through their intersecting identities—for example, as mothers, workers, victims of human rights abuses or members of a religious or ethnic group. However, research on intersecting identities is not sufficiently well developed to point to consistently successful strategies of identity mobilization. The most frequently mentioned frame is that of mobilizing motherhood, but the outcome of this strategy is decidedly ambivalent. Mobilizing women around their identity as mothers may help to mitigate risk or surmount resistance to their participation, but at the cost of reinforcing traditional norms regarding gender roles. Other types of intersecting identities—such as LGBTQIA, disability, age, ethnicity, or race—were not well explored in the literature that we reviewed.

In conclusion, although the literature on women's civic and political participation in the developing world is rich and growing, the number of rigorous empirical studies that test programmatic strategies for encouraging women's participation or that systematically consider resistance to changing gender norms is still small. Moreover, we found that very few studies specifically/empirically examine the risks to women of strategies to increase their civic and political participation. There is ample room for further research, and it is our hope that this meta-analysis, and the RKM resource will encourage other scholars to continue this body of work.

References

Acar, T. (2010). "Linking Theories of Framing and Collective Identity Formation: Women's Organizations' Involvement with the Supramed Strike." *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, *11*. [Online Journal]. Retrieved from http://journals.openedition.org/ejts/4314

Alami, A., Nedjat, S., Majdzadeh, R., Foroushani, A. R., Hoseini, S. J., & Malekafzali, H. (2013). "Factors influencing women's willingness to volunteer in the healthcare system: Evidence from the Islamic Republic of Iran." *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, 19(4), 348-355.

"Arab Barometer Survey Wave III 2012-2014." (2014). *Arab Barometer*. Retrieved from http://www.arabbarometer.org/waves/arab-barometer-wave-iii/

Arana, E. R., & Santacruz, G. M. (2005). "The political participation of women: A view from public opinion." [La participacion politica de las mujeres: una mirada desde la opinion publica]. *Estudios Centroamericanos*, 60(681-682), 659-676.

Bardall, G. (2013). "Gender-specific election violence: The role of information and communication technologies." *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 2(3), 60. http://doi.org/10.5334/sta.cs

Barnes, T. D., & Burchard, S. M. (2012). "'Engendering' politics: The impact of descriptive representation on women's political engagement in sub-Saharan Africa. " *Comparative Political Studies*, 46(7), 767–790.

Bauer, J. (2009). "Women and the 2005 election in Liberia." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *47*(2), 193-211. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X09003802

Bawa, S. (2012). "Women's rights and culture in Africa: A dialogue with global patriarchal traditions." *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, 33(1), 90-105. DOI: 10.1080/02255189.2012.664545

Beath, A., Christia, F., & Enikolopov, R. (2013). "Empowering women through development aid: Evidence from a field experiment in Afghanistan." *The American Political Science Review*, 107(3), 540-557. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000270

Bedi, T. (2006). Feminist theory and the right-wing: Shiv Sena women mobilize Mumbai. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, *7*(4), 51-68.

Benstead, L. J., Jamal, A. A., & Lust, E., (2015). "Is it gender, religiosity or both? A role congruity theory of candidate electability in transitional Tunisia." *Perspectives on Politics*, 13(1), 74-94.

Britton, H. E. (2002). "Coalition building, election rules, and party politics: South African women's path to parliament." *Africa Today*, 49(4), 32.

Bryld, E. (2001). "Increasing participation in democratic institutions through decentralization: Empowering women and scheduled castes and tribes through Panchayat Raj in rural India." *Democratization*, 8(3), 149-172.

Burnet, J. E. (2011). "Women have found respect: Gender quotas, symbolic representation, and female empowerment in Rwanda." *Politics & Gender*, 7(3), 303-334. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X11000250

Citron, D. K. (2014). *Hate crimes in cyberspace*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

Clayton, A. (2014). "Electoral gender quotas and attitudes toward traditional leaders: A policy experiment in Lesotho." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 33(4), 1007.

"Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions." (2011). Retrieved from http://training.cochrane.org/handbook

Coffe, H., & Bolzendahl, C. (2010). "Same game, different rules?: Gender differences in political participation." *Sex Roles*, 62(5-6), 318-333.

Coffe, H., & Bolzendahl, C. (2011). "Gender gaps in political participation across sub-Saharan African nations." *Social Indicators Research*, 102(2), 245-264.

Coffé, H., & Dilli, S. (2015). "The gender gap in political participation in Muslim-majority countries." *International Political Science Review*, 36(5), 526-544.

Coppedge, M., Gerring, J., Lindberg, S. I., Skaaning, S. E., Teorell, J. with Altman, D., Miri, F. (2016). "V-Dem Codebook v6." Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project.

Corboz, J. (2013). "Third-way neoliberalism and conditional cash transfers: The paradoxes of empowerment, participation and self-help among poor Uruguayan women*." The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 24(1), 64-80. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/taja.12022

Costa, A. A. A. (2010). "Quotas as a path to parity: Challenges to women's participation in politics." *Ids Bulletin-Institute of Development* Studies, 41(5), 116-120.

Cummins, D. (2011). "The problem of gender quotas: Women's representatives on Timor-Leste's suku councils." *Development in Practice*, 21(1), 85-95. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2011.530246

Dahlerup. D. (1988). "From a small to a large minority: Women in Scandinavian politics." *Scandinavian Political Studies,* 11 (4): 275-298.

Desposato, S., & Norrander, B. (2009). "The gender gap in Latin America: Contextual and individual influences on gender and political participation." *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(1), 141-162.

Duggan, M. (2017). "Online harassment 2017." Pew Research Center. Available at: http://www.pewinternet.org/2017/07/11/online-harassment-2017/

Eagle, R. B. (2015). "Loitering, lingering, hashtagging: Women reclaiming public space via #BoardtheBus, #StopStreetHarassment, and the #EverdaySexismProject." *Feminist Media Studies,* 15(2), 350-353.

Eckert, S., & Steiner, L. (2016). "Feminist uses of social media." In Novak, A. N., & El-Burki, I. J. (Eds.) *Defining identity and the changing scope of culture in the digital age,* (210-229). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Ellison, L., & Akdeniz, Y. (1998). "Cyber-stalking: The regulation of harassment on the internet." *Criminal Law Review*, 29, 29-48.

Elsadda, H. (2010). "Arab women bloggers: The emergence of literary counterpublics." *Middle East Journal of Culture & Communication,* 3(3), 312-332.

Espinal, R., & Zhao, S. (2015). "Gender gaps in civic and political participation in Latin America." *Latin American Politics and Society*, 57(1), 123-138.

Florez-Estrada, M. (2010). "Laura Chinchilla campaign and women: Opportunities or undertaking a new covenant with sex?" [La campana de Laura Chinchilla y las mujeres: Oportunismo o compromiso con un nuevo pacto sexual?]. *Revista de Ciencis Sociales*, 4, 85-99.

Franceschet, S., Krook, M. L., & Piscopo, J. M. (2012). *The impact of gender quotas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Franceschet, S., & Piscopo, J. M. (2008). "Gender quotas and women's substantive representation: Lessons from Argentina." *Politics & Gender*, 4(3), 393-425.

Franceschet, S., Piscopo, J. M. & Thomas, G. (2016). "Supermadres, maternal legacies and women's political participation in contemporary Latin America." *Journal of Latin American Studies*. 48(1), 1-32.

Gil-García, Ó. F. (2016). "Gender equality, community divisions, and autonomy: The Prospera conditional cash transfer program in Chiapas, Mexico." *Current Sociology (La Sociologie Contemporaine)*, 64(3), 447.

Gervais, C. (2010). From Discovery to Dissidence: Honduran Women's Conceptions and Claims of Human Rights. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, *11*(4), 19-36.

Gleason, S. (2001). "Female political participation and health in India." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 573(1), 105-126.

"Global Barometer Surveys: Questionnaires (2016)." *Global Barometer Surveys.* Retrieved from http://www.globalbarometer.net/data/questionnaires

Gottlieb, J. (2016). "Why might information exacerbate the gender gap in civic participation?: Evidence from Mali." *World Development*, 86, 95-110.

Guo, X., Zheng, Y., & Yang, L. (2009). "Women's participation in village autonomy in China: Evidence from Zhejiang Province." *The China Quarterly*, 197, 145-164.

Holvoet, N., & Inberg, L. (2014). "Gender responsive budgeting and the aid effectiveness agenda: experiences from Mozambique." Journal of International Women's Studies, 15(2), 61-79.

Htun, M., Lacalle, M., & Micozzi, J. P. (2013). "Does women's presence change legislative behavior?: Evidence from Argentina, 1983-2007." *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, 5(1), 95-125.

Htun, M., & Piscopo, J. (2014). "Women in politics and policy in Latin America and the Caribbean." In *Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum CPPF Working Papers on Women in Politics* (No. 2).

Hughes, M. M., Krook, M. L., & Paxton, P. (2015). "Transnational women's activism and the global diffusion of gender quotas." *International Studies Quarterly*, 59(2), 357-372. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/isqu.12190

Huiskamp, G. (2000). "Identity politics and democratic transitions in Latin America: (Re)organizing women's strategic interests through community activism." *Theory and Society*, 29(3), 385-424.

International Crisis Group (2013). "Women and conflict in Afghanistan." *Asia Report* No. 252. 14 October. Brussels.

Isaksson, A.-S., Kotsadam, A., & Nerman, M. (2014). "The gender gap in African political participation: Testing theories of individual and contextual determinants." *The Journal of Development Studies*, 50(2), 302.

Jennings, M. K. (1998). "Gender and political participation in the Chinese countryside." *The Journal of Politics*, 60(4), 954-973.

Jones, M. P. (2009). "Gender quotas, electoral laws, and the election of women: Evidence from the Latin American vanguard*." Comparative Political Studies*, 42(1), 56.

Josefsson, C. (2014). "Who benefits from gender quotas?: Assessing the impact of election procedure reform on members of the parliament's attributes in Uganda." *International Political Science Review,* 35(1), 93-105.

Karan, K., Gimeno, J. D., & Tandoc Jr, E. (2009). The Internet and mobile technologies in election campaigns: The GABRIELA Women's Party during the 2007 Philippine elections. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 6(3-4), 326-339.

Kenny, A. (2007). "The Philani experience: Gender equality and empowerment of women in South Africa*." Napa Bulletin*, 27(1), 27-39.

Khamis, S. (2010). "Islamic feminism in new Arab media: Platforms for self-expression and sites for multiple resistances." *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research,* 3(3), 237-255.

Kutz-Flaemenbaum, R. (2012). "Mobilizing Gender to Promote Peace: The Case of Machsom Watch." *Qualitative Sociology* 35*(*3), 293-310.

Lemaitre, J., & Sandvik, K. B. (2015). "Shifting frames, vanishing resources, and dangerous political opportunities: Legal mobilization among displaced women in Colombia." *Law & Society Review*, 49(1), 5-38.

Lombardo, E., & Meier, P. (2016). "Framing gender equality in the European Union political discourse." *Social Politics*, 15(1), 101-129.

Marsden, M. (2008). "Women, politics and Islamism in northern Pakistan." *Modern Asian Studies*, 42(2-3), 405-429. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X07003174

McNulty, S. L. (2015). "Barriers to participation: Exploring gender in Peru's participatory budget process." *The Journal of Development Studies*, 51(11), 1429.

Melkonian-Hoover, R. (2008). "Gendered pathways to the political: The political participation of women factory workers in Mexico." *Social Science Quarterly*, 89(2), 351-371. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6237.2008.00536.x

Mills, M. B. (2008). "Claiming space: Navigating landscapes of power and citizenship in Thai labor activism." *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems & World Economic Development,* 37(1), 89-128.

Morales Quiroga, M. (2008). "The first woman president of Chile: Explanation of triumph of Michelle Bachelet in the elections of 2005-2006?" [La primera mujer presidenta de Chile: que explico el triunfo de Michelle Bachelet en las elecciones de 2005-2006?]. *Latin American Research Review*, 43(1), 7-32.

Morgan, J., & Buice, M. (2013). "Latin American attitudes toward women in politics: The influence of elite cues, female advancement, and individual characteristics." *American Political Science Review*, 107(4), 644-662.

Muriaas, R. L., & Kayuni, H. M. (2013). "The reversed contagion effect: Explaining the unevenness of women's representation across South African municipalities." *Women's Studies International Forum,* 41, 150-159.

Nanes, S. (2015). "'The quota encouraged me to run': Evaluating Jordan's municipal quota for women." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 11(3), 261-282.

Newsom, V. A., & Lengel, L. (2012). Arab Women, Social Media, and the Arab Spring: Applying the framework of digital reflexivity to analyze gender and online activism. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, *13*(5), 31-45.

Norris, P. (2002). *Democratic phoenix: Reinventing political activism*. Cambridge University Press.

Odine, M. (2013). "Role of social media in the empowerment of Arab women." *Global Media Journal*, 12(22), 1–31.

Ogrodnik, Corinne, and Silvia Borzutzky. (2011). "Women under attack: Violence and poverty in Guatemala." *Journal of International Women's Studies,* 12(1), 55-67.

Pachón, M., Peña, X., & Wills, M. (2012). "Political participation in Latin America: An analysis from a gender perspective." *Revista de Ciencia Politica*, 32(2), 359-381.

Pant, B., & Standing, K. (2011). "Citizenship rights and women's roles in development in post-conflict Nepal." *Gender and Development*, 19(3), 409-421. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2011.625656

Pape, I. S. R. (2008). "'This is not a meeting for women': The sociocultural dynamics of rural women's political participation in the Bolivian Andes." *Latin American Perspectives*, 35(6), 41-62.

Patnaik, P. (2014). "Politics is not just a man's game: Women in democratic local governance of Odisha." *Social Change*, 4 4(1), 131-153.

Pieper Mooney, J. E. (2007). "Militant motherhood re-visited: Women's participation and political power in Argentina and Chile." *History Compass*, 5(3), 975-994. Doi: HTTP://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-0542.2007.00435.x

Piscopo, J. M. (2015). "States as gender equality activists: The evolution of quota laws in Latin America*." Latin American Politics and Society*, 57(3), 27-49.

Randall, V. (2006). "Legislative gender quotas and Indian exceptionalism: The travails of the women's reservation bill." *Comparative Politics*, 39(1), 63-82.

Ross, M. L. (2008). "Oil, Islam, and women." *American Political Science Review*, 102(1), 107-123.

Schuster, J. (2013). "Invisible feminists? Social media and young women's political participation." *Political Science*, 65(1), 8–24. http://doi.org/10.1177/0032318713486474

Sreberny, A. (2015). "Women's digital activism in a changing Middle East." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 47(2), 357–361. http://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743815000112

Sundström, A., Paxton, P. Wang, Y., & Lindberg, S. (2015). "Women's political empowerment: A new global index, 1900-2012." University of Gothenburg, Varieties of Democracy Institute, Working Paper.

Tong, J. (2003). "The gender gap in political culture and participation in China." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 36(2), 131–150.

UN Broadband Commission for Digital Development Working Group on Broadband and Gender (2015). "Cyber violence against woman and girls: A world-wide wake-up call." Retrieved from http://www.broadbandcommission.org/Documents/reports/bb-wg-gender-discussionpaper2015-executive-summary.pdf

Van Doorn-Harder, N. (2002). "The Indonesian Islamic debate on a woman president." *SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, 17(2), 164-190.

Vissandjee, B., Apale, A., Wieringa, S., Abdool, S., & Dupere, S. (2005). "Empowerment beyond numbers: Substantiating women's political participation." *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 7(2), 123-141.

Wang, Z., & Dai, W. (2013). "Women's participation in rural China's self-governance: Institutional, socioeconomic, and cultural factors in a Jiangsu County." *Governance*, 26(1), 91–118.

Worthen, H. (2015). "Indigenous women's political participation: Gendered labor and collective rights paradigms in Mexico." *Gender & Society*, 29(6), 914.

Zaman, F. (2012). "Bangladeshi Women's political empowerment in urban local governance." *South Asia Research*, 32(2), 81-101. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0262728012453488

Zanotti, L. (2013). "Resistance and the politics of negotiation: women, place and space among the Kayapo in Amazonia, Brazil." *Gender Place and Culture*, 20(3), 346-362. doi:10.1080/0966369x.2012.674927

Zetterberg, P. (2008). "The downside of gender quotas?: Institutional constraints on women in Mexican state legislatures." *Parliamentary Affairs*, 61(3), 442-460. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsn016