

Female participation in parliament. Are we ever going to converge to Scandinavia?

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Abstract

Despite the fact that female political participation has been steadily growing over time, women's representation in politics is substantially lower than their proportion in society. In this paper, we investigate the determinants of women's representation using a GMM system estimation to address the possible endogeneity. We employ a unique dataset that covers data for 130 countries from 1972 to 2005 in 7 different geographical regions to estimate a dynamic model for women's representation and calculate each region's steady state. In general, we find that the steady state values are above each region's current percentage of women in parliament; however, without changing other variables, no region significantly increases the percentage of women in parliament. Moreover, we find that 66-87% of the gap between each region's steady state with Scandinavia is explained by female secondary education enrollment, labor force participation, and political and economic rights.

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