

Limited Democracy? The Impact of Democratization on Women's Political Participation*

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Abstract

Democracy is believed to be more representative and inclusive than other forms of government and is generally coveted by the public. Gender equality is also considered as a core component of democracy. Yet, current literature that examines the gendered impact of democratization focuses on its influence on women's political representation and women's empowerment. Understudied is how democratic experiences shape other aspects of gender equality, such as women's political participation. Using the 2014 World Values Survey, this paper investigates the effect of democracy on various forms of women's political participation in 46 countries. We hypothesize that the longer a country experiences democracy, the more likely women are to engage in politics. A multilevel analysis finds that democratic experiences lead to higher conventional political action of women and the effect is also stronger for women than for men. However, our results also demonstrate that democratic experiences has a negative impact on women's unconventional political behavior. Our findings raise implications for the meaning and influence of democratization on gender equality, particularly in a comprehensive and unbiased form that gives women an opportunity to express their political preference via different venues.

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1 Introduction

In January 2018, a year after Trump's inauguration, thousands tweeted "Is Trump slowly killing democracy?" The concern over the survival of democracy is not new. Recent discussions surrounding the actions of the Trump administration and the rise of the right-wing nationalist movement frequently cite the experiences of the inter-war period in Europe (e.g. Berman (2007); Levitsky and Zblatt (2018)). Democracy is generally coveted because it gives citizens an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. Thus, any threat to democracies usually concerns the civic society. Through a democratic process, citizens are able to express their political preferences. Particularly in a functioning democracy, citizens' political preferences would be valued by their representatives and citizens could employ electoral means to hold their representatives accountable. Nevertheless, democracies have not always been inclusive of all citizens. Democracies have also not always guaranteed that every citizen's interests are represented. For example, most scholars consider that democratization had occurred before suffrage had been extended to women in many parts of the world. In other words, many regimes had been considered democratic before half of the population could partake in national elections.

Today a representative democracy is widely seen as an essential characteristic of the so-called democratic regimes. Scholars, thus, have increasingly paid attention to the consequences of democracy. Gender development, for example, is often seen as an end result of democratization. Prior studies examine the effect of democracy on gender equality by evaluating how democracy enhances the representation of women. Yet, little is known about how democracy may influence other aspects of gender equality, such as women's political participation. As Inglehart, Norris and Welzel (2002) argue, support for gender egalitarianism is the byproduct of broader cultural shifts as societies industrialize. They show that modernization enables the labor participation of women, motivating societies to shift their gender expectations and norms. Consequently, the development of democratic institutions strengthen. On the contrary, their findings raise

the question: if gender equality is one of the factors that shapes the consolidation of democracy, would a more consolidated democratic regime have a smaller gender gap in political participation? This paper, therefore, explores the impact of democratic experiences on women's political participation.

As evidence suggests that a democracy provides a platform for citizens to share their political preferences, there is a reason to believe that democratic regimes would have an impact on the civic engagement of citizens, particularly the marginalized groups. A higher level of political freedom is generally linked to a higher level of political participation. Nevertheless, evidence also shows that women and men do not have equal levels of voice and authority and moreover, gender inequality increases during the deliberation process (Karpowitz, Mendelberg and Shaker, 2012). As deliberation is gendered, there could be doubts about the effectiveness of democracy. Therefore, we contend that the connection between political freedom and participation is gendered.

Additionally, scholars who study comparative political institution have long been aware of the significance of the causes and consequences of democratization across the globe. While democratic theorists contend that participation is pivotal for achieving an inclusive democracy (Costain, 2005; Dryzek, 1996; Young, 2002), our understanding of how democracies could enhance political participation for women remains limited.

This article includes a global comparative analysis of the impact of democratic experiences on women's political participation in the last decade. Using the World Values Survey and various additional sources, we test our hypotheses on the positive impact of democratic experiences on women's political participation. Our multilevel analysis reveals that regimes with longer histories of democracy have a positive impact on women's conventional political engagement. In contrast, we also find that regimes with longer histories of democracy have a negative impact on women's unconventional political participation. Our analysis suggests that the impact of democratic experiences on the differences in how women and men behave politically also varies depending on the type of action.

This paper makes three major contributions to the studies of gender and compara-

tive politics. First, it investigates the influence of democratic experiences on women's political participation in a comparative perspective, allowing for a deeper understanding of how a democracy shapes a previously under-explored aspect of gender equality. Although ensuring that women have a significant presence in political institutions is crucial for the democratic process, women's political participation is equally important as it allows citizens to directly voice their political opinions and beliefs. In other words, while women's political representation and women's political engagement are both pivotal in gender development, they serve different functions and send different signals regarding the state of gender egalitarianism. Our article, thus fills the gap by addressing how democratic experiences could affect measures of gender equity that ensures that politicians are elected by the people and can be held accountable for representing their constituents.

Second, most previous works on the role of democracy and political participation focus on the civic engagement of all citizens, mostly in advanced democracies (Parry, Moyser and Day, 1992; Tolbert, McNeal and Smith, 2003; Zittel and Fuchs, 2007). Although some may focus exclusively on the linkage between democracy and women's political participation, they center on single case studies or cross-sectional analysis from decades ago (Alvarez, 1990; Waylen, 1994; Bari, 2005). We, nevertheless, consider the gendered aspect of the consequences of democracy. Our up-to-date cross-regional analysis encompasses countries that may share dissimilar political, social, and economic climates, allowing us to offer nuanced empirical findings on the connections between democratic experiences and women's political participation.

Third, our findings reveal that patterns of gender gaps exist among all forms of political activities. Additionally, the impact of democracy on the gender gap also varies across different modes of actions. This outcome illustrates that it is easier to encourage women to participate in activities that are more closely related to electoral institutions and involve less collaboration, risks, and costs. While our results on democratic consolidation's positive effect on women's conventional action and negative effect on women's unconventional action are not surprising, they shed a light on the potential structural

barriers that may prevent women from engaging in riskier and costly behavior. Our analysis offers implications for ways to enhance a more inclusive and representative democracy in order to ensure women’s willingness, safety, and space in engaging in all kinds of political actions.

In the following sections, we first provide an overview of extant scholarship on the impact of democracy and offer our theoretical frameworks that explain the connection between democratic experiences with women’s political participation. Next, we present our data and methodology, followed by a discussion of our results. Finally, we conclude with the implications of our findings and further exploration of the gendered effects of democratization.

2 Democratic Experiences and Political Participation

Following Tilly and Tarrow (2007), we posit that the frequency and mode of political participation of an individual are determined by calculation of the political opportunity structure¹ of the country that she belongs to. Democracy and democratization fundamentally change the political opportunity structure in three ways. First, democracies strengthen political pluralism, leading to the expansion of enfranchisement to groups of the population that have been previously barred from political participation. According to the selectorate theory, a defining characteristic of democracy is larger sizes of the selectorate and winning coalition compared to autocracy ((de Mesquita et al., 1999, 2003)). The increased population of selectorate does not only include the general population that can participate in free and fair elections; albeit gradual, democratization also extends voting rights and civil protection for ethnic minorities and women.

Second, due to the greater freedom of associations, democracy increases the amount of resources that citizens and groups can mobilize for political participation, which can

¹ political opportunity structure is defined as the features of regimes and institutions that facilitate or curb a political actor’s collective action (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007).

require much collective action. Following Olson (1965)'s logic, outcome of a successful political participation is a public good, and it is rational for an individual citizen to free ride on the common effort. Professional political organizations — using Lenin's expression, the "vanguards" — bear the costs of initial political action, such as organizing events, mobilizing resources, and bringing people to the streets in order to make collective action possible and successful. Thus, stronger initial organization reduces the participation cost of individual citizens, leading to a greater chance of overcoming collective action problem (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). For example, the Iranian revolutionaries (i.e., vanguards) initiated anti-regime movement despite the difficult challenges ahead, including the monarchy's societal support, strength of the security forces and their willingness to defend the monarchy, and foreign governments' support for the Shah regime (Kurzman, 1996). On the other hand, the populace that joined later were more cautious in calculating success chances of the revolution (ibid., 161-163). Kurzman (1996) concludes that perceived strength of the opposition groups helped the mobilization for the Iranian Revolution although the repressive organs of the monarchy was not objectively vulnerable.

Third, democracies changes the list of political actions that the government is willing to tolerate. Since the most fundamental difference between democracies and non-democracies is the lack of institutionalized consent by a popular majority (Svolik, 2012). This makes repression of the excluded population with the help of security forces crucial in order to remain in power. Not only are unconventional methods of political engagement, such as protests and strikes, met with brutal force in autocracies, state-sanctioned political actions, such as voting or membership in ruling parties, are predetermined and choreographed in order to give the impression that the regime is invulnerable or to hide behind the facade of elections from the international pressure (Magaloni, 2006; Levitsky and Way, 2010; Marinov and Goemans, 2014).

2.1 Non-linear Connection between Democracy and Participation

If we view political participation as a strategic action by rational citizens to make changes in politics, then democratization and longer years of democratic experience should increase the utility and decrease the cost of such participation, thus increasing the overall likelihood of all types of political participation by individual citizens. However, the relationship between the longevity of democratic experience and political participation is not always linear. We have observed a decline in political party and labor union memberships (Katz and Mair, 1995) and a loss of faith in democratic institutions and subsequent rises in populist movements that many times include the groups based on fringe or undemocratic ideologies (Foa and Mounk, 2016). What can explain this non-linearity?

First, if certain groups within polity view themselves as marginalized and unrecognized and believe that conventional modes of political participation do not bring meaningful changes, the cost of political participation outweighs the utility of it. In other words, institutional transformation itself does not guarantee the actual changes in perceptions or behavior of individual citizens. An example of this potential disconnection between institutional transformation and behavior is the gender pay gap that still persists in many developed democracies. Although the laws of these countries may not endorse wage discrimination based on gender, systemic gender wage gap exists among OECD member countries, ranging from 5.6% in New Zealand and 36.5% in South Korea (OECD, 2017). Another example that illustrates the disconnection between institutional transformation and political participation is the gap in socioeconomic resources and the level of political participation. Expanding upon Schlozman, Verba and Brady (2012), we continue to observe stratification of political participation levels by different quintiles of socioeconomic status in the United States. If such systemic discrimination based on gender, ethnic group, or socioeconomic status persists even after long years of democracy, the mere existence of democratic constitution may

not lead to an even increase in political participation levels across different social strata.

Second, the issue of contention changes as democratic institutions develop. Several decades have passed after the end of the World War II until the fundamental political and social rights of individuals were eventually expanded in advanced Western democracies. Social movements advocating for fundamental rights based on as civil, racial, gender, and labor dimensions should have the highest chances of success if social movement organizations and activists could mobilize as many people as possible and use tactics designed to cause as much disruption as possible. There are several explanations for the higher likelihood of success of social movements that aim at enhancing basic rights: (1) issues regarding one's fundamental rights involve a large number population and (2) the resistance by the dominant group should be greatest.²

With the issue characteristics and availability of the mass infused with social activism, it is rational for social movement activists to organize their members and employ tactics around unconventional, non-institutional, and disruptive social movements. However, once the great battles to secure fundamental political and social rights are won, political parties and social movement organizations cannot expect to maintain massive participants they once hold (Katz and Mair, 1995). Moreover, the development of mass media has blurred the clear distinctive class identities across the society. Now it has become more difficult to draw the "us vs. them" line to inculcate social activism and mobilize mass (Katz and Mair, 1995). The changes in the issue area require activists with different profiles, resulting the rise of "professional" social movement activists. Movements surrounding the environment or scientific education in schools, for example, need activists with knowledge and skills to study the issue and to persuade and lobby potential supporters inside the formal state structure because the "victory point" of the movement cannot be achieved by forcing the state into acquiescing in

²Extending fundamental rights such as civil or voting rights are more likely to be seen as a threat to status quo and the dominant population (especially ordinary citizens) within a society is more likely to view them as zero-sum games. On the one hand, issues like environment affect a smaller number of population and ordinary citizens will not feel threatened with improved environmental protection. On the other hand, it is also easier to infuse social activism and bring more people into streets if the issue is about their fundamental rights concerning individuals' accesses and entitlements.

front of massive mobilization (Santoro and McGuire, 1997). Contentious politics are more likely to succeed by persuading policymakers and bureaucrats to pass legislations or make changes in regulations. If the most effective method of political participation varies depending on the most important issues of contention, then it would change individual citizen's calculation of the utility and costs of different types of political participation.

As a result, the relationship between the level of political participation and the "democraticness" (i.e., regime type or the length of democratic experience) is not always linear. Furthermore, citizens within a country are not monolithic. There is a need to dissect different identity groups and consider the pattern of political participation with the level of systemic discriminations they face and the utility calculations for different modes of political participation. Below, we describe the relationship among gender, democracy, and political participation in more detail.

2.2 Gender Gaps in Democratic Participation

As identity politics has risen as a key feature of the participatory revolution in Western democracies in the last 50 years, scholars have questioned the boundaries of inclusion in the common conceptualization of democracy. Nevertheless, when scholars study identity politics, they have often assumed a view of racial identity (Pitts, 2005; Berman, Eyoh and Kymlicka, 2004; Calhoun, 1994; Heyes, 2002; Tolbert and Hero, 1996). Understudied is how gender identity plays a role in the democratic process, and more importantly, the gendered impact of the democratic process. Scholars have identified various factors that shape the gender gaps in political participation. Yet, little is known about the influence of democratization on women's political behavior.

Some find that individual-level characteristics shape the gender gap in political behavior. Socioeconomic status, employment status, education, social capital, biographical availability, age, and gender are personal traits that help explain individuals' motivation to act politically (Schussman and Soule, 2005; Petrie, 2004; Clark and Clark, 1986; Verba, Burns and Schlozman, 1997; Ockey, 2004; Galston, 2004; Kam and Palmer,

2008; Persson, 2015; Bakker and De Vreese, 2011; Melo and Stockemer, 2014; Gil de Zúñiga, Jung and Valenzuela, 2012; Lindquist, 1964; Lowndes, 2004; Schlozman, Burns and Verba, 1999).

Some find that context matters for how women and men participate in politics. For example, economic development is found to transform social norms and values, which then can affect how women participate in politics (Inglehart, Norris and Welzel, 2002). Moreover, prior studies show that increases in women's presence in political institutions could either encourages or discourages women to participate in politics (Liu and Banaszak, 2017; Liu, 2018; Karp and Banducci, 2008; Campbell and Wolbrecht, 2006; Barnes and Burchard, 2013). Universal suffrage and voting laws are also found to normalize voting, which has led to a higher voting turnout of women in countries where there is a longer history of suffrage extension to women (Kenworthy and Malami, 1999). Other contextual explanations, such as civil liberties, economic performance, electoral systems, and structure of welfare state, also help explain the likelihood of women to engage in politics (Karpowitz, Mendelberg and Shaker, 2012; Desposato and Norrander, 2009; Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2006). While these contextual factors help explain the gender gap in political participation, lacking is how democratization, as a national-level indicator, affects women's and men's political behavior.

Traditionally, participation has been examined through the lens of emancipatory process, which helps nurture liberalism and tolerance (Walzer, 2006; Molyneux, 2001). The conceptualization of democratic participation has, however, transformed. Borrowing from Bauman (2000)'s idea of liquid modernity that suggests a rapidly changing order of social constructs that are never long-lasting. As the world rapidly changes, the legitimacy of democracy has also come to question. Some consider that the current state of democratization is regressive (Jones and Cullis, 1986; Reenock, Bernhard and Sobek, 2007). Recent events, however, raise doubts on whether democratic participation enables a platform to express opinion and more importantly allow the government to respond. For example, the rise of the right-wing populists across the globe, the M5S movement in Italy, and the increase in civic activism on the digital media all illus-

trate that the patterns of emancipation of individual freedom and political preference through democratic participation have become more fluid than ever. Taking gender into consideration enhances our understanding of the gendered norms of political participation.

A democratic regime is supposedly more representative than a non-democracy. Democracies give marginalized groups, including women, an avenue to express their political opinion. Therefore, as the regime's democratic experiences increase, we suspect that women would be more likely to engage in politics in a conventional way, such as via voting, than women in autocracies:

H1a A government with more experienced of democracy is associated with greater women's conventional political participation.

The gendered process of democratization involves a basic paradox: inclusive participation represents the universal values of democracy and yet women have been traditionally treated as the other. Particularly, as (Karpowitz, Mendelberg and Shaker, 2012) find that women and men do not have equal voice and authority in deliberation, we remain skeptical about whether democracy would encourage women to utilize the formal electoral institutions to deliberate. Such othering of women in a democratic institution could create a backlash and discourage women from wanting to be in any part of the so-called democratic process. This "othering" based on gender leads to our hypothesis:

H1b A government with more experienced of democracy is associated with lower women's conventional political participation.

As women continue to be othered in democratically experienced regimes, they may realize that orthodox ways of communicating their political preferences may not as effective. Their experiences, thus, suggest new possibilities for unconventional political

actions that do not fall within the realm of formal political institutions. Women may realize that they need to take extreme measures to achieve their goals. The activity to utilize unconventional methods to expression opinion could be realized in a democracy because women because democracy supposedly provides a safe place for people to demonstrate. Therefore we suspect that women’s unconventional political behavior is likely to be more vibrant in democracies than that in non-democracies:

H2a A government with more experienced of democracy is associated with greater women’s unconventional political participation.

Conversely, it is also possible that women feel that the democratic institutions suffice in giving them a space to express their political opinion and pressure the administration. Hence, women may be less likely to seek alternative methods to get their voices heard. Thus, we hypothesize that women in democracies are less likely to engage in unconventional political actions than women in non-democracies:

H2b A government with more experienced of democracy is associated with lower women’s unconventional political participation.

3 Data and Methodology

We use the latest sixth wave of the World Values Survey (2014), fielded in 2010 through 2014, to test how democratic experiences play a role in women’s political participation. We combine the World Values Survey with additional national-level measures, including the democratic experiences, taken from Polity IV data (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2017). The national-level indicators are taken from one year prior to each fielding of the WVS. Our dataset includes 46 countries: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Australia, Armenia, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Cyprus, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, India, Iraq, Japan,

Kazakhstan, Jordan, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Slovenia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United States of America, Uruguay, and Yemen.

3.1 Dependent Variables

We are primarily interested in how women's political participation is influenced by their regime's experiences with democracy. We examine women's political participation using five dependent variables: (1) voting; (2) petition-signing; (3) peaceful demonstration; (4) boycott; and (5) strike. These five dependent variables differ in many ways. They range from conventional to unconventional political participation. They also range from indirect action to direct action, as well as non-confrontational action to confrontational action. They also differ in the amount of initiatives that are required to start action and the amount of cooperation needed for the action to succeed. The extent to which these actions communicate participants' political preferences and the extent to which these actions can put pressure on the government also vary. Studying the different modes of political actions allow us to evaluate the variation in political behavior under the influence of democratic experiences. As displayed in Table 1, our test of significance shows that gender gaps are present across all forms of participation. As suggested by other literature, women are less likely than men to vote. Surprisingly, though, women participate significantly more than men in actions that require collaboration, such as petition-signing, peaceful demonstration, and boycott. Women also partake in actions that are considered unconventional and confrontational - strike - significantly more than men.

Table 1: Gender gaps in dependent variables

	Male	Female	Difference
Vote	1.42	1.40	0.02**
Petition-signing	1.26	1.31	-0.05***
Peaceful demonstration	1.34	1.46	-0.12***
Boycott	1.54	1.65	-0.11***
Strike	1.48	1.61	-0.13***

We first start by examining political actions that are conventional and closely related to electoral politics. We do so by measuring the frequency of voting. Voting is closely related to electoral activity and relatively low in cost, in terms of time, effort, and cooperation with others. Specifically, voting is a high-pressure activity as it determines the outcome of the election and thus lead to a certain level of control of the government. In the WVS, respondents are asked about how often they vote in the local and national elections. We create an index that combines respondents' voting turnout at the local level and national level and normalize it. The responses range from 0 = never to 2 = always.

Next, we evaluate political activity that has been considered borderline unconventional due to the increased popularity and usage of technology. Signing petitions, participating in peaceful demonstrations, and boycotting are actions that require initiatives and help communicating preferences to political leaders. Individuals are always aware that these three modes of actions require collective action in order to successfully demand changes from political leaders. Respondents are asked about their past experiences and propensity to engage in the following activities: signing a petition, joining in boycotts, and attending peaceful demonstrations. Their responses range from 0 = would never do to 2 = have done.

Lastly, we evaluate the gender gap in political actions that involve direct action and are unconventional and potentially confrontational or illegal. Strikes require collective efforts and involve greater risks. Strikes also are extremely disruptive as they can go on for days. Strikes, however, also directly communicate individuals' preferences and

put pressure on political actions to respond to demands. Similarly to our measures of unconventional political activities, respondents' histories or propensities to strike are coded as 0 if they would never do it, 1 if they might do it, and 2 if they have done it.

3.2 Independent Variables

Our primary variable of interest is the regime's experiences with democracy. We measure the number of years a country has turned democratic to operationalize democratic experiences. Democratic experiences differ significantly across our sampled countries, ranging from 0 years to 202 years of democratic experiences. Specifically, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, and Yemen are autocracies that have had no experiences with democracy at all whereas the U.S.A. has had 202 years of democracy, followed by New Zealand with 134 years of experiences with democracy. The average number of years of democracy in our sample is at 36 years.

3.3 Control Variables

We control for a number of national-level variables that could be associate with women's political participation. First, economic development is found to be crucial to the resources and space that individuals have to political participation. We include GDP per capita, collected from the World Development Indicator and the Penn World Table (one year prior to each fielding of the WVS) as a control for each regime's economic development. We also account for several indicators of gender development as they may shape the likelihood of women engaging in politics. We anticipate that women's labor participation is associated with women's political participation. Specifically, scholars show that employed women are more likely to partake in politics because they are more likely to be recruited to political actions by their coworkers at the work force. Thus, we include a control women's labor participation by using the percentage of women over the age of 155 work in non-agricultural sectors. Much variation exists in the percentage of women (age 15+) participating in the labor force across our sampled countries,

ranging from 17% in Jordan to 52% in Rwanda. The data come from the International Labor Organization's ILOSTAT database (2017).

Additionally, we control for women's political access and rights as they have been found to influence women's political participation. We do so by including two measures: (1) the percentage of women in national legislatures and (2) the number of years women have been granted suffrage. Both measures are taken from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2018), which indicates the number of representation women have at the lower house and the year which voting rights were granted to women in each country. The extent to which women are represented in the lower house varies across our sampled countries. For example, Yemen and Lebanon have the smallest percentage of women in the lower house, at 0.3% and 3% respectively whereas Rwanda and Sweden have the highest proportion of women in the lower house, at 45% and 56%, respectively. These statistics show that much variation exists in women's political representation in our sample.

The number of years women have been granted suffrage, on the other hand, represents the amount of political access women have, as well as the amount of experiences women may have with the democratic processes and institutions. The experiences of women with suffrage differ across our sampled countries. Some regimes have a shorter history of women's universal suffrage. For example, women in Jordan were not granted universal suffrage until 32 years prior to the fielding of the 6th wave of the WVS. In contrast, Australia and New Zealand had more than 100 years of history of women's universal suffrage by the time the 6th wave of the WVS was fielded. The experience of women's suffrage extension in our sample is on average 75 years.

In addition to the controls at the national level, we also include several controls at the individual level to account for any influence that personal traits may have on gender differences in political participation. We first control for the sex (female=1) of respondents. Prior literature shows that Women generally engage less in politics, with the exception of voting. Particularly in western democracies, the gender gap in voting has been found to be diminishing throughout the last few decades. Our hypotheses

center on the effect of democratic experiences on women’s political behavior. Therefore, we interact female with the number of years since democratization.

Second, socioeconomic status is found to shape political engagement. Consequently, we control for respondents’ socioeconomic status by including measures of their educational background, income, and employment status. Furthermore, biographical availability is also found to shape one’s likelihood to partake in politics. Therefore, we control for respondents’ marital and cohabitation status. Individuals who are married or living with a partner is coded 1. All individual-level data come from the World Values Survey data (2014). Table 2 displays the summary statistics of our dependent and independent variables.

Table 2: Summary statistics of variables

Variable	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Vote	1.40	0	2
Petition-signing	1.27	0	2
Peaceful demonstration	1.40	0	2
Boycott	1.60	0	2
Strike	1.55	0	2
Female	0.52	0	1
Logged age	3.70	2.83	4.61
Education	4.61	0	8
Employed	0.53	0	1
Income	3.77	0	9
Married	0.64	0	1
Women’s labor participation	39.89	17.41	52.47
Women’s political representation	20.75	0.03	56.3
Logged # of years of women’s suffrage	4.29	3.50	4.78
Logged GDP per Capita	13.28	9.72	16.56
Logged # of years of democracy	2.42	0	5.32

The respondents of the WVS are clustered within countries. Therefore, in order to analyze how democratic experiences at the national level affects women’s political activity at the individual level, we take a multilevel modeling approach. Not only does this approach enable us to account for the clustered nature of the WVS, but it also allows the intercept to vary randomly across countries Goldstein (2011). We also employ

a cross-level interaction term - the sex of respondents and democratic experiences - to examine the impact of democratic experiences on women's political participation. Below is our model:

$$Y_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(Female_i) + \beta_2(Age_i) + \beta_3(Education_i) \\ + \beta_4(Employment_i) + \beta_5(Income_i) + \beta_6(Maritalstatus_i) + e_i$$

$$\beta_0 = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(Yearsofdemocracy_j) + \gamma_{02}(GDPpercapita_j) \\ + \gamma_{03}(Women'slaborforceparticipation_j) + \gamma_{04}(Yearsofwomen'ssuffrage_j) \\ + \gamma_{05}(Women'spoliticalrepresentation_j) + \mu_0$$

Our cross-level interaction in the model between the sex of the respondent and women's political representation is as follows:

$$\beta_1 = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}(Yearsofdemocracy) + \mu_1$$

4 Discussion of Results

We examine whether increases in democratic experiences are correlated with increases in women's political participation in 46 countries. Our findings, reported in Table 3, suggest that democratic experiences have a positive impact on individuals' likelihood to vote and sign petitions. However, our results also show that democratic experiences are negatively correlated with individuals' likelihood to partake in actions that are less conventional: attending peaceful demonstrations, joining boycotts, and going on strikes. Specifically, as Table 3 illustrates, a significant gender gap is persistent across all modes of political participation. In other words, how democratic experiences influence men's and women's political behavior differ across most modes of political actions.

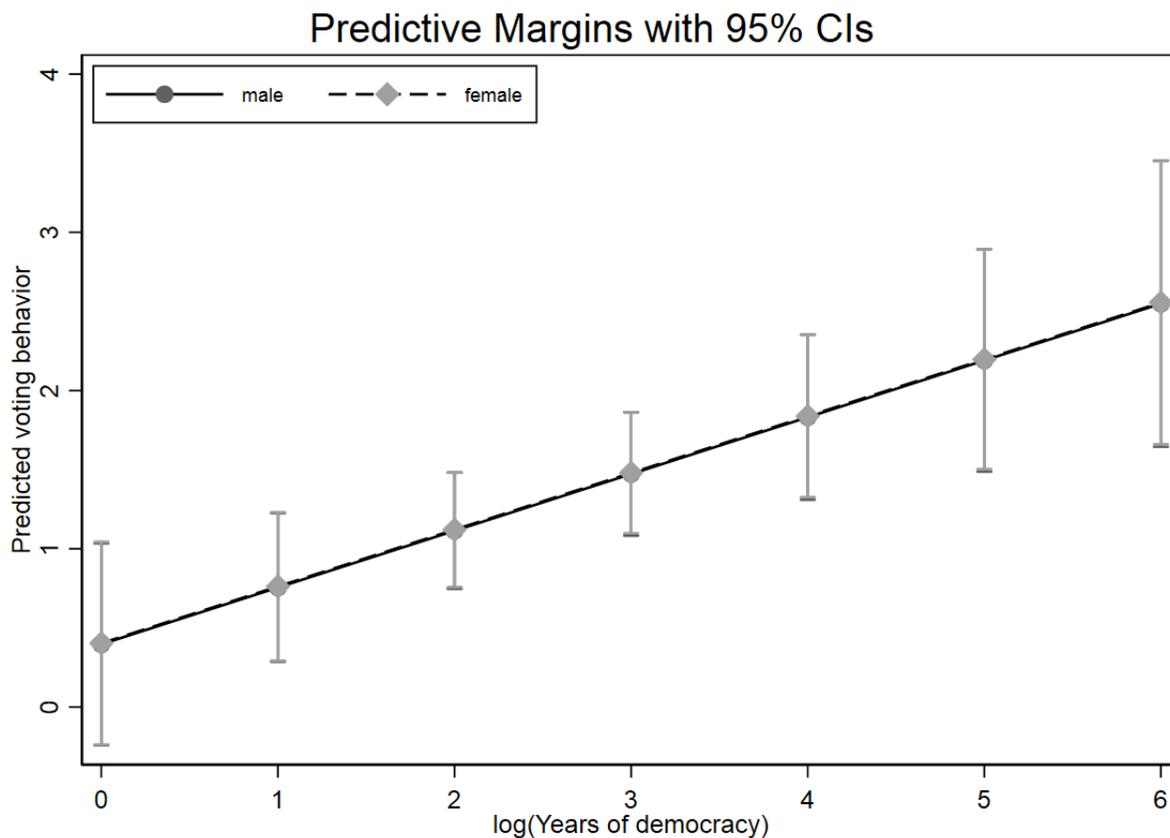
Table 3: Impact of Democratic Experiences on Women’s Political Participation

	Vote	Petition	Peaceful demonstration	Boycott	Strike
Female (=1)	-0.04*** (0.009)	0.06*** (0.009)	0.10*** (0.009)	-0.06*** (0.008)	0.07*** (0.008)
Logged # of years of democracy	0.36*** (0.115)	0.15 (0.128)	-0.06*** (0.018)	-0.06*** (0.017)	-0.03 (0.029)
Female * logged # of years of democracy	0.01*** (0.003)	-0.01*** (0.003)	-0.00 (0.003)	0.01** (0.003)	0.01*** (0.003)
Individual-level					
Logged age	0.48*** (0.008)	-0.04*** (0.008)	-0.00 (0.008)	0.03 (0.006)	0.07*** (0.007)
Education	0.01*** (0.001)	-0.05*** (0.001)	-0.05*** (0.001)	-0.03*** (0.001)	-0.03*** (0.001)
Employed (=1)	0.06*** (0.006)	-0.07*** (0.006)	-0.06*** (0.006)	-0.05*** (0.005)	-0.07*** (0.005)
Income	0.00** (0.001)	-0.01*** (0.001)	0.00 (0.001)	-0.00*** (0.001)	-0.00 (0.001)
Married (=1)	0.10*** (0.006)	-0.01** (0.006)	0.01 (0.006)	0.01** (0.005)	0.00 (0.005)
National-level					
Women’s labor participation	0.11*** (0.023)	0.11*** (0.025)	0.01* (0.004)	0.01** (0.004)	0.02*** (0.006)
Women’s political representation	-0.03** (0.015)	-0.04** (0.017)	-0.01*** (0.002)	-0.01*** (0.002)	-0.01** (0.004)
Logged women’s suffrage	-5.59*** (0.064)	-6.04*** (0.686)	-0.23 (0.141)	-0.31** (0.133)	-0.78*** (0.212)
Logged GDP per Capita	-0.30*** (0.101)	-0.34*** (0.111)	-0.02 (0.016)	-0.03*** (0.015)	-0.05** (0.025)
Constant	22.80*** (2.123)	28.14*** (2.252)	2.85*** (0.537)	3.31*** (0.506)	5.01*** (0.802)
# of observations	66,164	64,296	64,787	64,095	64,364
# of countries	46	46	46	46	46

Our graphs also demonstrate the effect of democratic experiences on individuals’ different modes of political actions. Specifically, Figure 1 illustrates that as the logged number of years of democracy a regime has experienced increases, the likelihood of both men and women to vote also increase. While both men and women are likely to turn up to vote in regimes with longer histories of democracy, a gender gap exists in their

behavior. Women are more likely to vote than men are in regimes with more democratic experiences, the gender gap for voting behavior, though, is extremely small. Specifically, when the regime has 0 years of democratic experiences, the predicted behavior voting behavior of women is on average 0.01 points higher than that of men. The gender gap in voting turnout remains the same as the regime reaches 202 years — the gender difference remains at 0.01 points. Looking more closely, as the logged number of years of democracy increases from 0 to 6, women’s voting turn out on average increased by 2.15 points, which is the same amount of increase in men’s voting behavior.

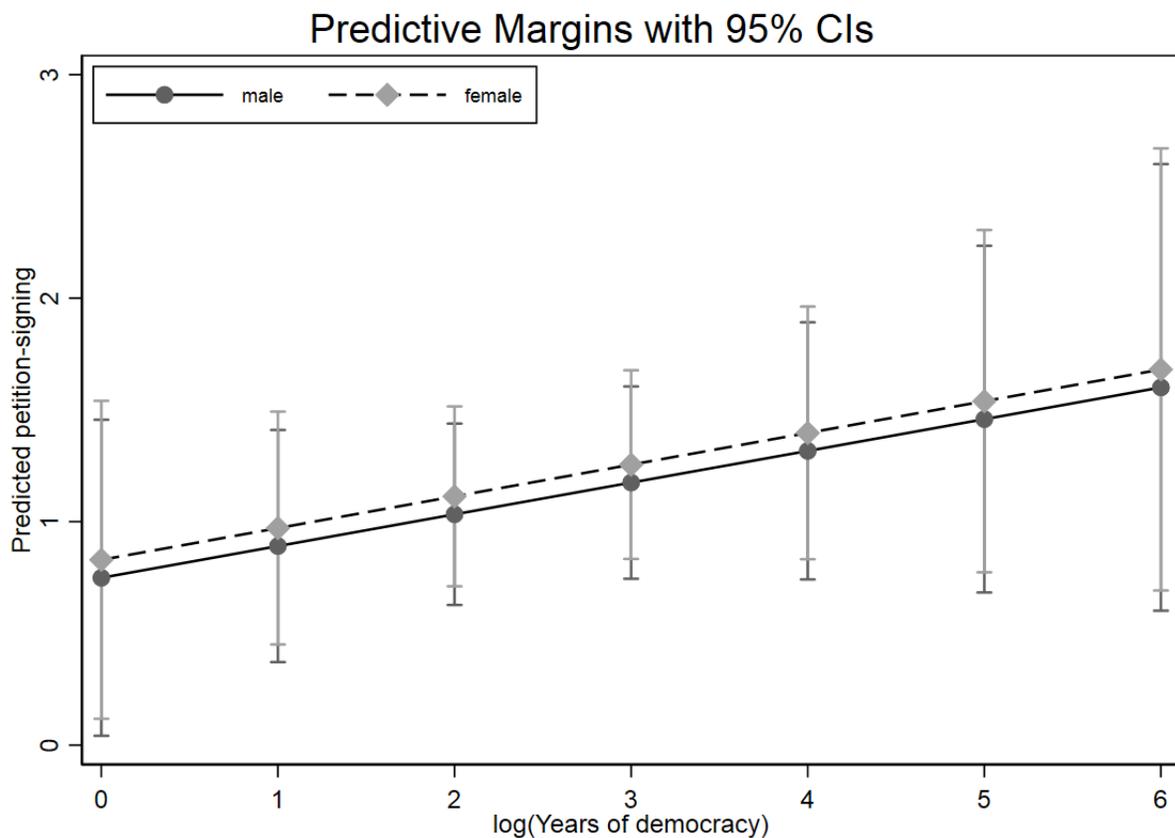
Figure 1: Gender gap in voting



Similarly, both men and women are likely to sign petitions in regimes with longer histories of democracy. Nevertheless, a gender gap exists in men’s and women’s propensity to sign petitions. Figure 2 illustrates that as the logged number of years of democracy a regime experiences increases, both women and men become more likely to sign peti-

tions. However, there is a gender difference in the extent to which men and women are likely to sign petitions. When the regime experiences 0 years of democracy, the predicted behavior in petition-signing is on average 0.08 points higher for women than men. The gender gap in voting increases slightly as regimes gain experiences with democracy. Specifically, as the regime reaches the full potential of democracy at 202 years, women on average are 0.08 points more likely than men to sign petitions. More specifically, as the regime's experiences with democracy increases from 0 to 202 years, women's predicted behavior in signing petitions on average increases 0.78 points whereas men's predicted likelihood to sign petition on average increases 0.75 points.

Figure 2: Gender gap in petition-signing



Turning to unconventional political participation, Figure 3 depicts the gender gap between women's and men's likelihood to participate in peaceful demonstrations, which does not diminish as the regime gains experiences with democracy. Women's protest

activity decreases by 0.37 points and men’s also decreases by 0.37 points as the regime goes from having no experience with democracy to much experience in democracy. Looking more closely, when the regime has no experience with democracy at all, the predicted protest activity for women is on average 0.12 points higher than that for men. As the regime’s democratic experiences reach a peak, women’s protest activity on average is 0.12 points more likely to occur than that of men.

Figure 3: Gender gap in peaceful demonstration

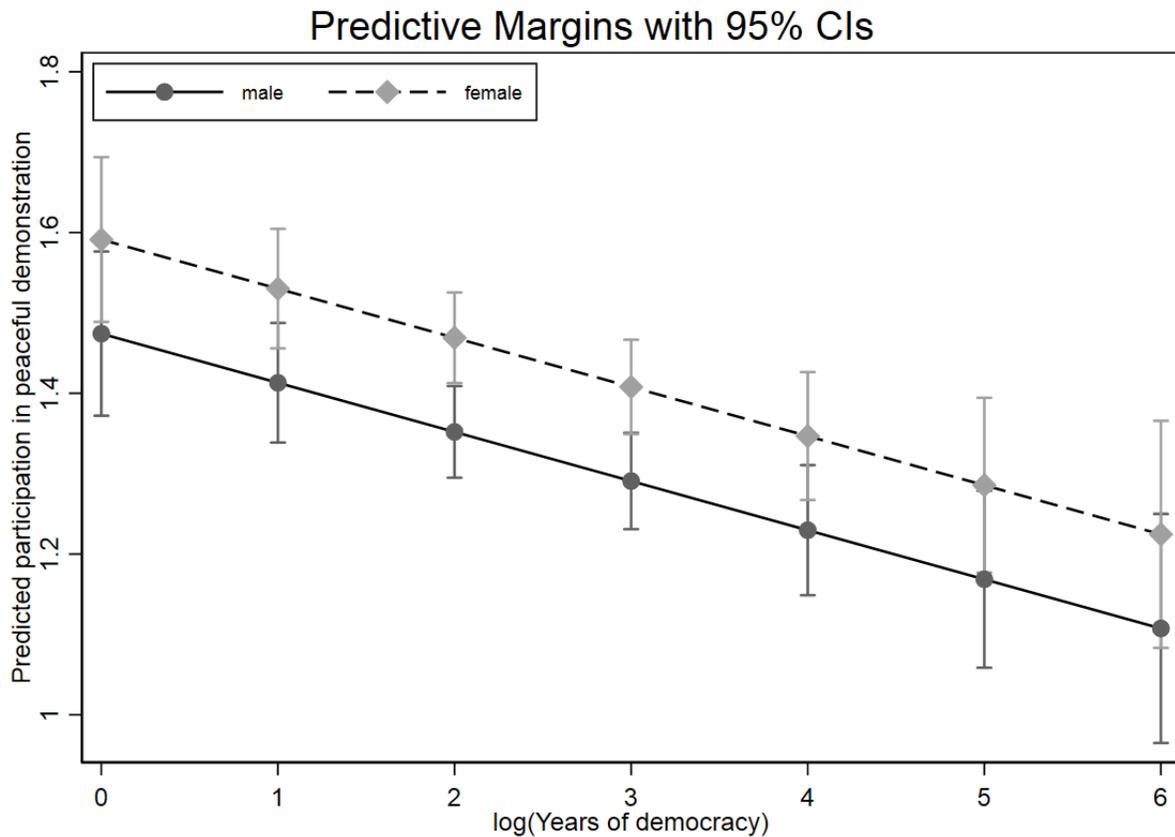


Figure 4 illustrates the influence of democratic experiences on women’s likelihood to join boycotts. As the regime’s history of democracy goes from 0 years to 202 years, women’s likelihood to join boycotts on average decreases 0.37 points, which is about the same for men’s likelihood to join boycotts on average. More specifically, when the regime experiences 0 years of democracy, women are 0.10 points more likely than men to claim that they have joined boycotts. When the regime’s democratic history reaches

the peak, women’s likelihood to boycott is also 0.10 points higher than that of men. The gender gap in boycotts persists as it does in voting and petition-signing. The gender gap also does not diminish with the increases in democratic experiences.

Figure 4: Gender gap in boycotts

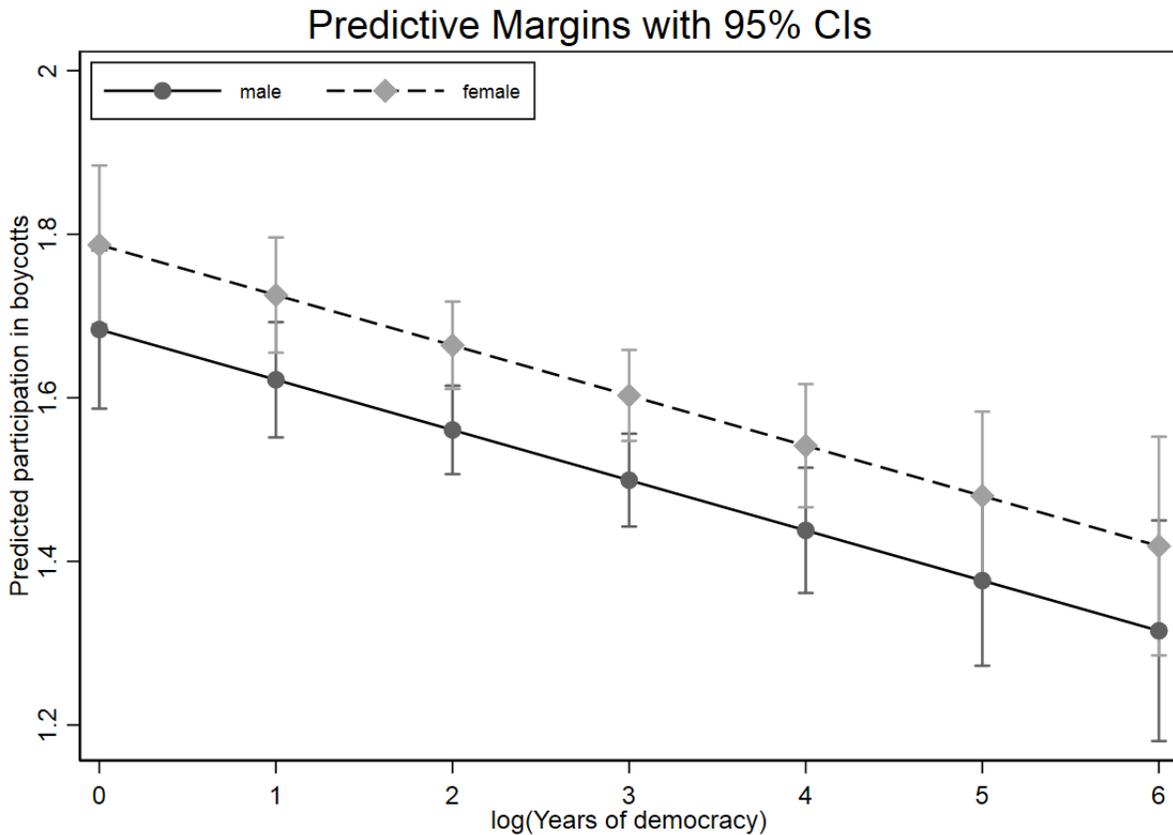
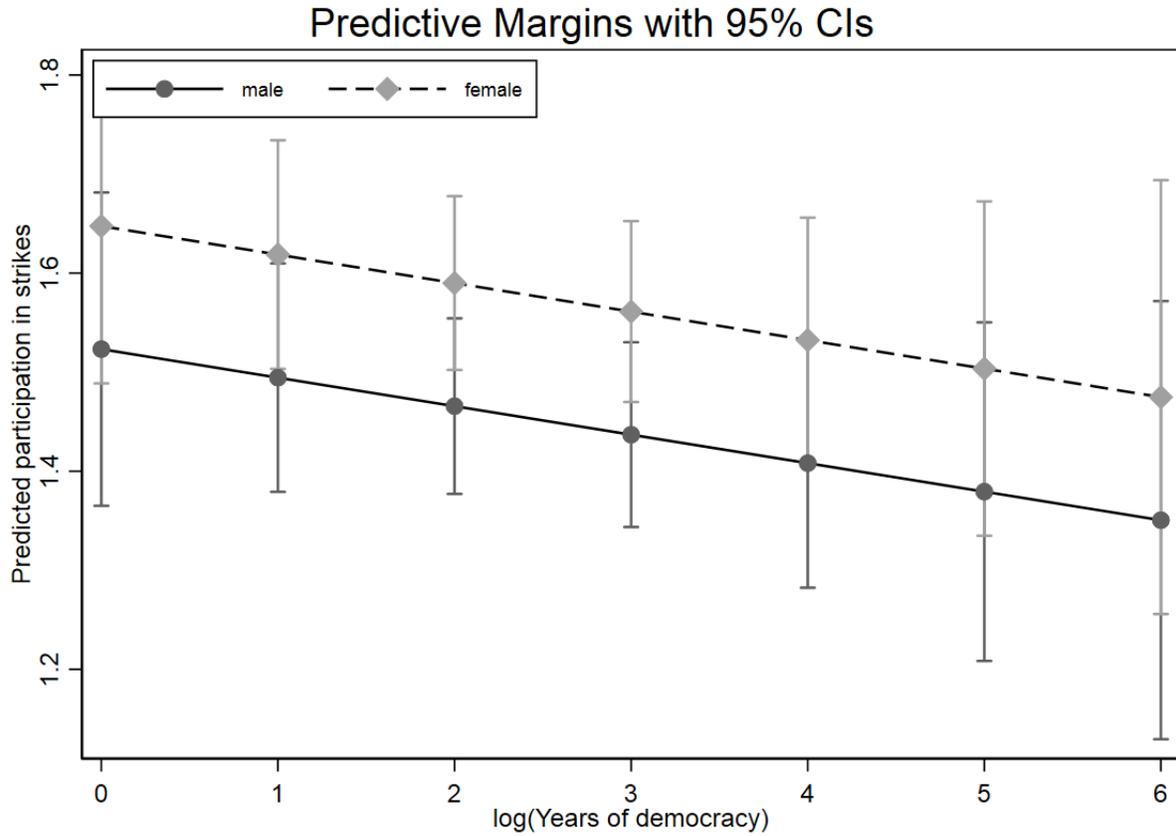


Figure 5 depicts the gender gap between women’s and men’s likelihood to go on strikes, which does not diminish as the regime gains experiences with democracy. Women’s striking activity decreases by 0.17 points and men’s also decreases by 0.17 points as the regime goes from having no experience with democracy to much experience in democracy. Furthermore, when the regime has no experience with democracy at all, the predicted striking activity for women is on average 0.12 points higher than that for men. As the regime’s democratic experiences reach a peak, women’s striking activity on average is 0.12 points more likely to occur than that of men.

Figure 5: Gender gap in strikes



5 Discussion

On the one hand, our results show that our *H1a*, which states that a government with more experienced democracy is associated with greater women's conventional political participation, is supported. Women in regimes that are more experienced with democracy are more likely to turn out to vote at both local and national elections, as well as sign petitions than women in regimes that are less experienced with democracy. Voting and petition-signing are conventional modes of political participation that are related to electoral institutions and help individuals communicate political preferences to representatives. However, they are also not disruptive and put minimum pressure on the administration. The political processes and institutions in democracies allow women to

hold their representatives accountable and thus increase their likelihood to participate in politics which they feel may feel is fair and open.

On the other hand, our results show that our *H2b*, which states that a government with more experienced democracy is associated with lower women's unconventional political participation, is supported. This result can possibly be explained by the effectiveness and representativeness of democracies in giving women a voice. If women felt that democratic institutions sufficiently provide them an avenue to express their political interests using conventional outlets, such as voting and petition-signing, then they are less likely to engage in a risky and costly behavior, such as joining in street protests, boycotting or going on strikes.

While our findings suggest that democratic experiences shape women's political activity, they also demonstrate that the impact of democratic experiences differ in the modes of actions in which women engage. Women in longer and more durable democracies are likely to utilize conventional outlets to pressure the government whereas women in regimes that have yet to democratize or have democratized in recent years are less likely to do so. Conversely, women in regimes that are less experienced in democracies are more likely to engage in unconventional behavior than women in established democracies.

Moreover, our findings illustrate that the extent to which differences exist between women and men varies significantly depending on the type of political actions. Under the influence of democratic regimes, the gender disparities in voting and petition-signing are smaller than those in peaceful demonstrations, boycotts, and strikes. The impact of democratic experiences on gender gaps indicate that women are catching up to men in conventional political activity while work still needs to be done to diminish the gender gap on unconventional political participation. In comparison to conventional behavior, unconventional political actions require more time and energy, which systematically bar women from engaging in such activities.

6 Conclusion

Scholarship on democratic and autocratic regimes show that democracies are supposed to be better at enabling citizens to express their political preferences and also better at representing citizens' interests. While democracies have been found to provide more opportunities for the marginalized groups to be part of the political process, little is known about the extent to which the marginalized groups, including women, are truly part of the political process. More specifically, although the consequences of democracy have been the core of comparative politics; understudied is the role it plays in shaping women's participation in politics.

By employing the latest wave of the WVS and additional sources, we demonstrate that correlations exist between regimes' democratic experiences and women's political participation. Specifically, our multilevel analysis reveals the more experienced a regime is with democracy, the more likely women are to engage in conventional forms of political actions, such as voting and petition-signing. Conversely, the more experienced a regime is with democracy, the fewer women are to engage in unconventional and confrontational forms of political activities, namely street demonstrations, boycotts, and strikes. Gender gaps are also revealed across the various modes of political actions; however, the gaps are more significant in women's and men's unconventional political behavior than in women's and men's conventional political behavior.

Not only does this paper present the effect of democratic experiences on women's political actions, but it also raises implications for how scholars, policymakers, and the civic society can move forward with achieving inclusive and representative democracies for women. Specifically, in addition to prior studies on the impact of democratization and women's representation and empowerment, we show that women are more likely to vote and sign petitions in established democracies. Our up-to-date cross-regional analysis suggests that democracy is also connected with various aspects of gender equality. While our findings reveal that patterns of gender gap exist among all forms of political activities, they shed light on the importance of considering the mechanisms for

why gender gap may exist among different modes of political actions under different democratic experiences.

Several questions, nonetheless, remain unanswered in our research. First, while our study provides a contemporary analysis of the impact of democratization on women's political participation in the last decade, unknown is how this impact may be consistent throughout time. It is worthwhile to explore a cross-sectional, time-series analysis to further broaden our understanding of the consequences of democratic regimes. Second, while our study suggests that gender matters in comprehending the connections between democratic experiences and political participation, how might democratic experiences affect the propensity of those having intersectional identities to engage in conventional and unconventional politics is under-investigated. Future research should explore the racialized aspects of democratization, as well.

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