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The gender dimension of inequality

During Labour's period in opposition since 2008, discussions of economic inequality and gender inequality have often been portrayed as at odds with each other. The former is framed as material, meaningful and representative of a class politics that, if addressed, would remedy inequality. By contrast, the latter is framed as a variation of 'identity politics', whereby material wellbeing is eschewed in favour of a politics of presence (Edwards 2009, 2011, 2013a). This is not a new standoff: the old left in New Zealand has a long history of resisting feminist politics, while Labourist feminism has an equally long history of championing women's economic equality. Women parliamentarians have been the conduit for some of the more significant reforms (Coney 1993; Curtin 2008; Curtin and Sawyer 1996; Curtin and Teghtsoonian 2010; Davies 1984, 1997; Grey 2002; Nolan 2000; Wilson 2013).

Gender equality in political power and economic resources in post-industrial democracies has grown tremendously in the past 50 years. Over recent decades, women have sought, and in many countries gained, greater access to the labour market, equality before the law and social reforms that impact their everyday lives. Alongside this, more women are running for and being elected to national parliaments than ever before, and a record number of women hold executive positions within their nations' governments (Curtin and Sawyer 2011; Lovenduski 2005; Paxton, Kunovich and Hughes 2007).

However, gender inequalities remain. In 2006, the World Economic Forum began an annual assessment of the global gender gap in women's empowerment and employed measures that sought to capture the economic, political and social dimensions of women's lives. In 2014, the Global Gender Gap Index ranked New Zealand as 30th on equality in economic participation and opportunity, a composite indicator drawing on five variables: labour force participation, wage equality for similar work, estimated earned income, the proportion of women managers and senior officials, and the proportion of professional occupations. While women had reached parity with men on the latter variable (thus boosting the overall score), New Zealand ranked 67th on women's estimated earned income. By contrast, when Labour's fifth term in government ended in 2008, New Zealand was ranked seventh on the economic dimension. While this ranking is also dependent on the performance of other countries, it shows that New Zealand has fallen behind while other countries have moved ahead.

The forum's index explicitly recognises that improving gender parity in the economic sphere is also connected to women's engagement in public life. Women's voice and descriptive presence in the political arena results in the advocacy and prioritisation of issues that have broad societal implications for the economy, the family, education and health. Moreover, women's engagement in public life is considered to foster 'greater credibility in institutions, and heightened democratic outcomes', with evidence to suggest that women's political leadership and wider economic participation are correlated (World Economic Forum 2015). This conclusion reflects scholarly research that shows that the descriptive representation of women relates significantly to the substantive representation of women's interests, including the gendered dimensions of economic inequality (Bolzendahl and Brooks 2007; Carroll 2001; Curtin 2008; Schwandt-Bayer 2006; Swers 2002; Waring, Greenwood and Pintat 2000).

If women's representation matters to women's material equality, it is unsurprising that international research indicates that women's political attitudes tend to differ from men's. For example, women have been found to be more supportive of social service spending (Manza and Brooks 1998). While women used to be more likely to vote for the right, as a result of their increasing rates of labour force participation and their apparently positive attitudes towards social spending, in recent decades women have turned to the left in most post-industrial societies (Inglehart and Norris 2000). Women might have higher concern for the needs and

rights of minorities and be more aware of discrimination that women themselves often experience. Cross-national research indicates nuanced interactions between self-interest and women's attitudes to social injustice, much depending on context such as the former East–West division (Davidson, Steinmann and Wegener 1995). Further explanations suggest that the development over time of women's greater likelihood to lean to the left can be explained by women's greater insecurity associated with the decline of marriage (Edlund and Pande 2002), but this may vary according to the labour market opportunities available to them (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006).

Despite women's increased influence and representation at the highest levels, research on a number of Western industrialised democracies also finds a persistent gender gap in political participation, with women less politically engaged than men (for example, Burns 2007; Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010; Schlozman, Burns and Verba 1999). This is crucial, since political participation is a central component of democracy, and people who participate in politics are more likely to have an influence (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). This is particularly relevant and important since international evidence indicates, as suggested above, that women and men tend to differ in their party choices and policy ideas (for example, Giger 2009; Inglehart and Norris 2003; Manza and Brooks 1998). In addition, while some scholars note that gender differences in political participation are often small in comparison to other cleavages such as education or age (Burns 2007; Norris 2002; Parry, Moyser and Day 1992), gender is a cleavage that cuts across these other areas of stratification, making it salient for everyone (Martin 2004; Risman 1998).

These international findings confirm that a review of gender differences in vote choice, political attitudes and knowledge, and the significance of women's political representation, might help us understand the puzzle of the 2014 election. If women voters are more likely to vote for the party that will advance the material wellbeing of families and those less fortunate, why was Labour unable to benefit from this predisposition? In order to answer this question, we address theoretical and empirical claims that women and men tend to have different opinions on social issues relevant to inequality, and on the representation of other distinct groups.

Gender gaps in party choice and political attitudes

Leading up to the 2014 election in New Zealand, feminists had made considerable efforts to provoke parties to address gender inequality in their campaign promises. A Women's Election Agenda Aotearoa (2014) presented a 100-point plan calling on parties to commit to de facto equality for women by 2020 (MacLennan 2014). The agenda laid out a range of policy issues and solutions necessary to progress gender equality. The report began with the policy issue of domestic violence, then moving on to key issues relating to women's economic inequality, including access to benefits, superannuation, pay equity, paid parental leave, a universal basic income and affordable child care.

The agenda formed the basis of a six-part television series on Face TV, a public access television channel. It was uploaded to YouTube and was also sent to the 10 main registered political parties with a request to advise which aspects they supported. The parties' responses were then marked out of 100, with five parties being ranked (Greens, Labour, National, Māori and United Future). Both the Green Party and the Māori Party amended their policies as a result (Walters 2014). By contrast, ACT NZ, MANA, the Conservatives and New Zealand First offered no response, while the Internet Party stated they were a 'feminist party' and would respond with their own policy. The 'feminist party' claim got some attention and drew some criticism (Ellipsister 2014), but for the most part gender inequality issues only took place around the margins of the campaign (Goldsmith 2014; Salient 2014).

In the end, despite this feminist campaign, there were only minor gender differences in party choice. As noted earlier, research on gender and voting behaviour across Western post-industrial nations has found that women have turned towards the left since the 1980s (for example, Giger 2009; Inglehart and Norris 2003; Knutsen 2001; Manza and Brooks 1998). However, in the case of New Zealand, gender differences in party preferences at the 2011 New Zealand general election were not significant (Coffé 2013a). Indeed, the only significant gender difference was for New Zealand First, with women being less likely than men to vote New Zealand First. This represents a change from the past. In the early days of election surveys in New Zealand, it was found that women were more likely to vote for the right than the left (Vowles 1993: 124). Between

1993–2011, significant gender differences in preferences for the two major parties appeared: men were more likely to lean right and women more likely to lean left (Curtin 2014). This overall pattern is consistent with international research that identifies a change towards a so-called *modern gender gap* in the 1980s, with women now being more left-wing compared with men, having been more right-wing in the past (Inglehart and Norris 2003). In terms of self-position on the left–right scale, there was no significant difference between women and men in New Zealand in 2014 (see Chapter 4).

The reasons for a lack of major gender differences in party choice in the most recent New Zealand elections merit further research. The leadership of Helen Clark (from 1993 to 2008) no doubt attracted women toward Labour, and her last election as Labour leader in 2008 was the most recent with a significant National–Labour gender gap. Yet Labour has continued to retain effective female MPs. Many Labour policies have been intended to attract women voters, so much so that they came under attack within the party as part of its alleged overemphasis on ‘identity politics’. Policies leaning towards the interests of women have become framed negatively rather than positively.

Efforts to increase the number of women in parliamentary politics elsewhere have often used explicit quotas, some required in electoral law, or otherwise in party candidate selection rules. In New Zealand, only the Green Party requires a gender-blended list. Although Labour had rejected a process used in the British Labour Party for all women shortlists in its electorate candidate selection process, its adoption of a gender target in late 2013 provided fuel to anti-Labour bloggers during the campaign (Goldsmith 2014). Labour presented policies to address the gender pay gap and family and sexual violence, but the latter was overshadowed by Labour leader David Cunliffe’s apology in early July for ‘being a man’. Speaking at a Women’s Refuge Event he stated: ‘Can I begin by saying I’m sorry—I don’t often say it—I’m sorry for being a man, right now. Because family and sexual violence is perpetrated overwhelmingly by men against women and children’. Many journalists and commentators viewed the apology as a mistake (Hosking 2014b; C. Robinson 2014; Watkin 2014), arguing that most of middle New Zealand did not recognise the concept of ‘rape culture’ and were ambivalent about the issue of sexual violence, despite New Zealand’s high rates of family and domestic violence.

A few argued it was an important, albeit electorally risky, statement highlighting the male-on-female violence that underpins rape culture in New Zealand, an issue highlighted by the ‘Roastbusters’¹ case (McLauchlan 2014c; Miller 2014). The risk was that traditional male voters in particular would see the statement as another of Labour’s detours into ‘identity’ politics (Miller 2014; see also Edwards 2014g). It ensured Cunliffe received significant media attention ahead of the party’s Congress, but much of it presented him as some sort of ‘male hating wimp’ (Bradbury 2014b) or worse, a lazy, ill-disciplined leader (Watkin 2014).

National leader John Key in his turn seemed unable to demonstrate empathy and support for a high-profile victim of sexual assault.² His position sat at odds with National’s long-standing position on family and sexual violence that was a key feature of its women’s affairs policy in 2014 (Chappell and Curtin 2013; Hosking 2014b). In contrast to its 2011 campaign to ‘crack down’ on sole parent beneficiaries, National’s Women’s Affairs Policy in 2014 was more positive, including commitments to increasing paid parental leave, family tax credits, offering free doctors’ visits and prescriptions for children as well as broader rhetorical commitments to advance women’s economic independence and representation on boards through the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (National Party 2014b).

Evidence of a female response to the parties’ positions on women’s issues can be found, but there are no major apparent effects. Figure 9.1 displays our findings based on a simple cross-tabulation of gender against the party vote. There are small gender gaps for Labour and National, but these are not statistically significant, confirmed by the overlapping confidence intervals. Women were significantly more likely to have voted Green compared with men. This latter finding confirms an international pattern. For example, Knutsen (2001) has shown that Swedish women were significantly more likely to support the Green Party in the 1990s compared with men. Rüdiger (2012) revealed a similar trend of a feminisation of the Green voters in Germany. Controlling for the social structure baseline variables (Chapter 4), the probability of women voting Green in 2014

1 The ‘Roastbusters’ were a group of young men who encouraged young women to become intoxicated and then subjected them to sexual abuse, from which the men concerned escaped prosecution.

2 A young woman was subjected to sexual abuse by a person with diplomatic immunity who was allowed to leave the country after being accused. After expressions of public outrage, he was returned to New Zealand for a successful prosecution (Davison 2014a).

falls short of statistical significance. This does not deny the Green gender difference, simply indicating the underlying reasons for it in the social structural foundations of the Green vote.

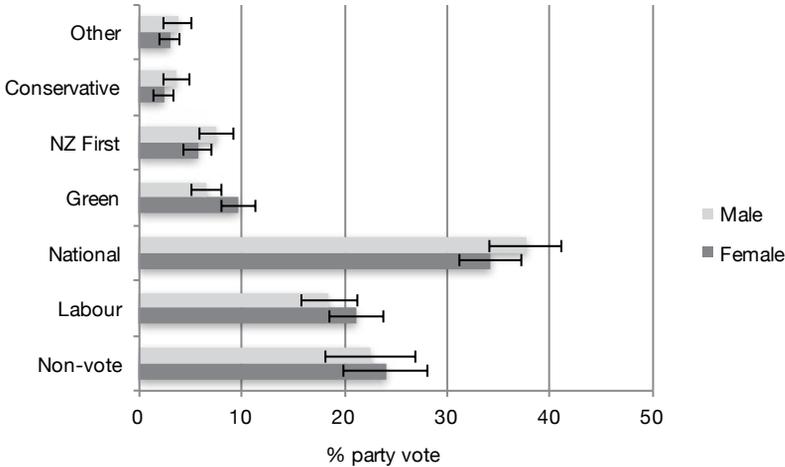


Figure 9.1: Percentage party votes for women and men

Source: New Zealand Election Study 2014.

There were reasons why women might find the Greens more consistently feminist than Labour. The Greens produced a comprehensive women's policy in June 2014. Linked to broader principles of equality, the document was the most comprehensive of the parties, in terms of its scope and specifics. Discussing the compounding effects of multiple variables in terms of 'intersectionality', it recognised that women were not a homogenous group as well as the need to undo structural discrimination, in terms of paid employment, family responsibilities and leadership (Green Party 2014c). Economic inequality was articulated in terms of the need for both equal pay and pay equity, alongside a living wage, while the broader pursuit of gender equality would involve mainstreaming gender analysis on all government bills and the development of a national action plan towards gender equality. Alongside this were policies addressing family and sexual violence, as well as bodily sovereignty.

Despite promising a range of initiatives to advance women's material wellbeing, the majority of the media attention was given to the Greens' position on abortion decriminalisation. Anti-abortion groups such as Family First, Men Against Abortion, Right to Life and the Salvation Army were quick to condemn the proposal. Nevertheless, this negative coverage

did apparently little to dent the Greens' female support base. The party's female co-leader, Metiria Turei, is well liked by women, significantly more so than men. Women were, however, also more likely to prefer the male co-leader of the Greens at the 2014 elections, Russel Norman, compared with his male counterparts. Given women's greater support for the Green Party and the close link between supporting a party and liking that same leader's party, this should obviously not come as a surprise.

While Figure 9.1 shows no significant effects with respect to gender for New Zealand First, our multivariate analysis in Chapter 4 revealed a marginally significant male bias among voters for New Zealand First with the social and demographic controls. When we combine those who voted for New Zealand First with those who supported the Conservative Party and ACT, we also find that women are significantly less likely to vote for these parties (8 per cent female compared to 12 per cent for men). In this case, the estimate survives the addition of the controls for age, work and marital status. Finally, Figure 9.1 shows a non-significant difference for turnout: women may be slightly more likely to vote, but this is well within confidence intervals. Chapter 11 returns to turnout and gender; our null finding here is an artefact of the New Zealand Election Study (NZES) sample size. With larger samples, women can be identified as somewhat more likely to vote than men.

Gender differences in policy issue positions

The lack of a significant gender gap in vote choice for the major parties does not preclude women and men having different political attitudes and different policy positions. Figure 9.2 shows that there is a significant difference between women and men on whether or not the Treaty of Waitangi should be part of the law, with women being more likely to support the Treaty in the law. As reported in Chapter 10, there is also an age difference, with the young being more in favour of the Treaty. Figure 9.2 shows that this is predominantly the effect of younger women. Women aged 40 years and younger are significantly more pro-Treaty compared to their male counterparts. Controls for marital and work status do not influence this finding. Earlier New Zealand research on these questions drew on the 1990 NZES, and also found that women were more favourable to the Treaty of Waitangi than men and more opposed to sporting contacts with apartheid South Africa. In terms of issue salience more widely, women rated health and education to be more

important political issues than men (Aimer 1993). All this was broadly consistent with findings in other comparable countries. Drawing on a cluster analysis based on political attitude questions (Vowles and Aimer 1993: 207–08; Aimer 1993: 122), this research found that women were more likely to be found in the small cluster to the furthest left, and men in another small cluster to the furthest right. Nearly 25 years later, this still accords with our findings in 2014.

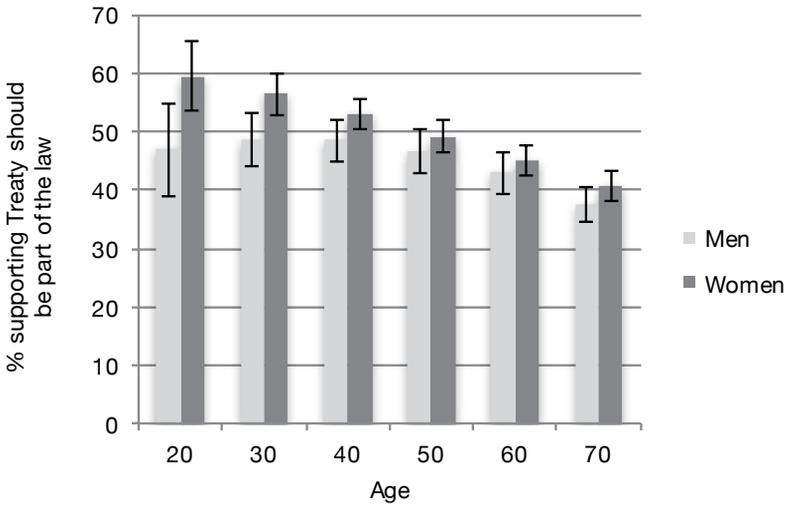


Figure 9.2: Percentage support that the Treaty of Waitangi should be part of the law by gender

Note: Results are based on an OLS regression model interacting gender with age and age-squared, with controls for Māori versus non-Māori primary ethnic identification.

Source: New Zealand Election Study 2014.

As discussed above, there was evidence in 1990 that women were somewhat to the left of men in their perceptions of issue salience, particularly in terms of the importance of health and education (Aimer 1993). If this pattern still holds, we might expect to find some evidence for women to be somewhat to the left on expenditure and distributional issues, as well as in their preferences for government action on inequality.

Figure 9.3 shows the probability of respondents disliking inequality. As in earlier chapters, it relies on a combination of the two NZES questions: ‘The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels’; and ‘Differences in income in New Zealand are too large’.

Figure 9.3 shows that if there are any effects, they are most likely to be a result of age rather than gender, with older people being more likely to dislike inequality than the young.

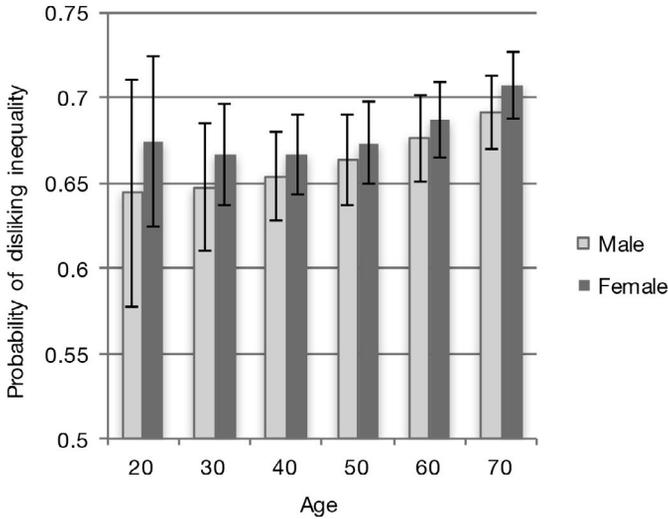


Figure 9.3: Preferences concerning inequality and gender

Note: Regression on female/male, age and age squared, with interactions.

Source: New Zealand Election Study 2014.

Turning to our measures of support for universal compared with targeted benefits, Figure 9.4 shows that there are gender differences in supporting expenditure on universal benefits such as health, education and taxpayer-funded pensions. These gender differences are particularly significant among those between around 40 and 60. Differences outside this age band are within confidence intervals, and thus not statistically significant. Adding the number of asset types and whether or not respondents feared their income would decline in the next year only marginally narrows the gap between men and women in the 40–60 age group. The gender differences in that age group cannot be explained by owning assets and fears of loss of income.

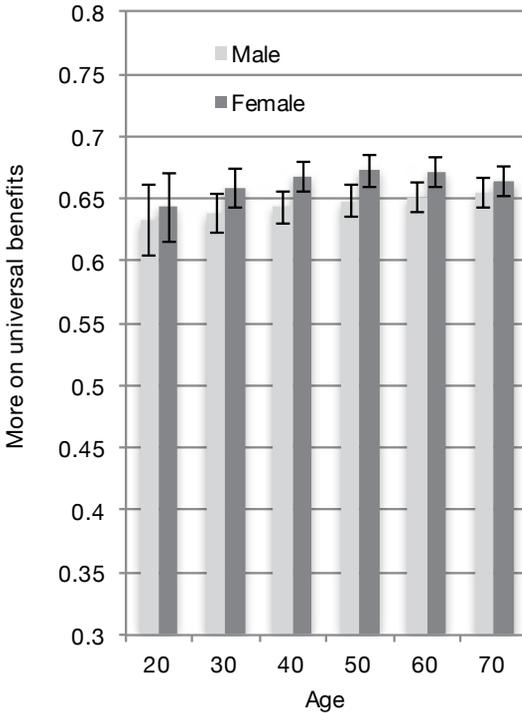


Figure 9.4: Preferences for expenditure on universal benefits by gender and age

Note for Figures 9.4 and 9.5: Regression on female/male, age and age squared, with interactions. Universal benefits: health, education and pensions (New Zealand Superannuation); targeted benefits: unemployment and social welfare.

Source: New Zealand Election Study 2014.

Figure 9.5 shows no significant gender differences within any of the age groups in response to questions about targeted benefits. Across the age and gender groups, women around the age of 20 are significantly more likely to favour targeted expenditure than anyone who is aged 40 and over, except perhaps those around 70. When controls for work and marital status are introduced, the gender gap opens more widely at age 70. Adding further controls for ownership of assets and fear of income loss reduces the tendency of young women to support targeted benefits, making it apparently insignificant. This means that young women are more likely than older women and men to be and feel economically vulnerable, and this vulnerability explains their greater preference for higher benefit expenditure. Being single or widowed and being out of the workforce increases support for targeted benefits regardless of age or gender, as self-interest would also suggest.

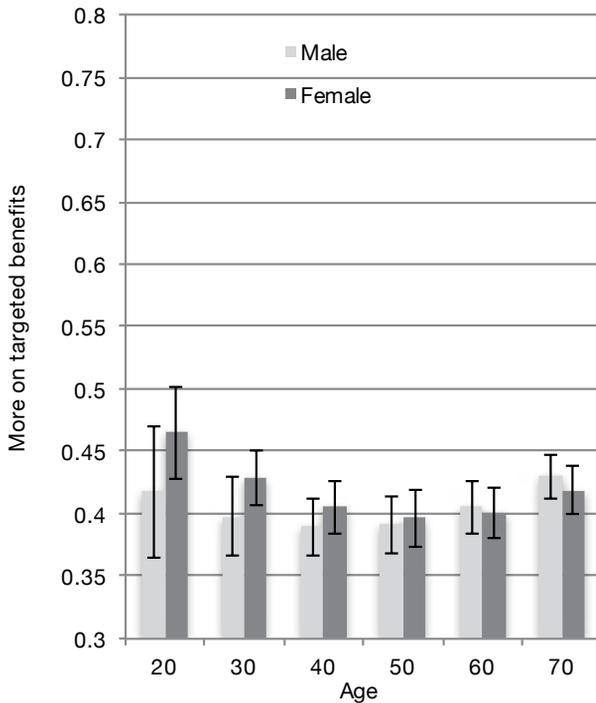


Figure 9.5: Preferences for expenditure on targeted benefits by gender and age

Source: New Zealand Election Study 2014.

Consistent with their greater support for the Green Party, women are significantly more supportive of doing more to protect the environment than men (Figure 9.6). On a seven-point scale (reversed from the questionnaire original)—with 7 meaning that ‘we should concentrate more on protecting the environment, even it means lower economic development’, and 1 meaning that ‘we should concentrate more on encouraging economic development even if it is at the expense of the environment’—women score on average 4.7 whereas men have an average score of 4.4. While this is a relatively small difference, it is statistically significant. Applying controls indicates that stronger support for the environment among younger and more educated women helps to explain why women are more likely to support the Green Party than men. While we do see some gender differences in a range of political attitudes connected to social and economic inequality, as well as to the environment, these are small, and reflect the findings on the limited effect of gender on vote choice.

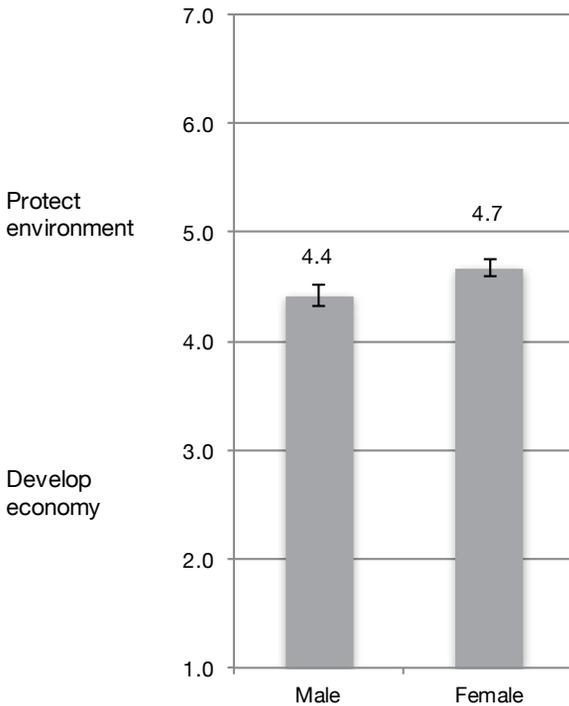


Figure 9.6: Means of protecting the environment versus economic development by gender

Source: New Zealand Election Study 2014.

Gender gaps in political interest and knowledge

A participatory and knowledgeable public is crucial for democratic responsiveness and is seen as an intrinsic democratic good, crucial for a well-functioning democracy (Verba 1996). As we will address more fully in Chapter 11, lower participation rates in politics is likely to intensify inequalities, particularly if low involvement is found among social groups already lacking power and resources. Hence, systematic and persistent patterns of unequal political interest, knowledge and participation along existing lines of stratification, such as gender, are threats to political equality, democratic performance and an egalitarian and fair society. Previous international research (for example, Coffé 2013b; Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Frazer and Macdonald 2003;

Verba, Burns and Schlozman 1997) has shown that women generally tend to be significantly less likely to engage with, be interested in and be knowledgeable about politics. Comparing interest in politics in New Zealand back to 1963 and up to 1990, Vowles (1993: 124) found that while a gap remained in 1990, it had narrowed considerably since 1963.

The gender gap in political interest was still significant in 2014. Figure 9.7 shows average scores on a 0 to 3 scale with 0 referring to being not at all interested in what is going on in politics, and 3 indicating a high interest in politics. As can be seen, women score on average 1.73, which is significantly lower than the 1.92 score among men. This difference remains after controls for age, work and marital status.

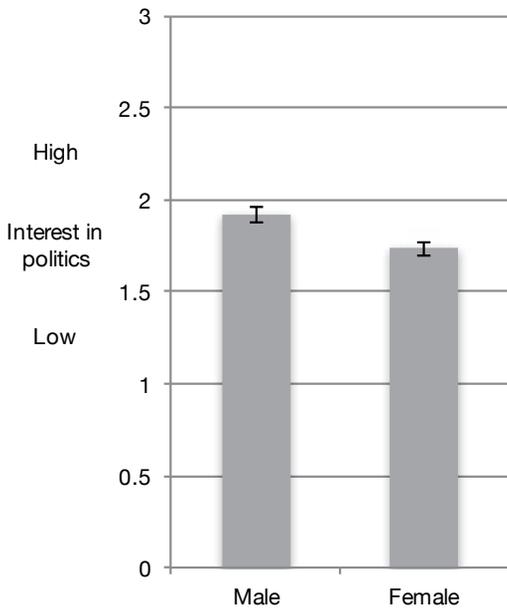


Figure 9.7: Interest in politics by gender

Source: New Zealand Election Study 2014.

The 2014 NZES also confirms that New Zealand men are significantly more knowledgeable about politics compared with women. The survey included four multiple choice questions, asking the name of the Minister of Finance before the 2014 General Election, the most recently released unemployment rate in New Zealand, the party that won the second largest number of seats in parliament at the 2014 General Election, and the name of the current Secretary-General of the United Nations.

When the four knowledge questions are combined into a 0–4 scale of political knowledge where each right answer is coded ‘1’ and ‘don’t know’ or a wrong answer scores ‘0’, women score on average 2.3, whereas men score on average 2.7. Men thus outperform women when it comes to political knowledge as estimated this way. Women are also significantly more likely to opt for the ‘don’t know’ option than men. This confirms other research showing that women are more risk-averse and disproportionately less likely to guess than men are (Lizotte and Sidman 2009; Mondak and Anderson 2004). With that in mind, once the ‘don’t know’ option responses are eliminated, men no longer outscore women in knowing the Minister of Finance’s name, and the gap on the knowledge scale narrows between women (2.9) and men (3.1). Controls for age, work and marital status do not affect these differences. However, some gender scholars argue that general indicators referring to ‘politics’ are gender-biased and treat politics as synonymous with the traditional arenas of electoral and legislative politics, resulting in an underestimation of women’s political interest and knowledge in particular areas (Coffé 2013b; Dolan 2011; Stolle and Gidengil 2010). Acknowledging this critique, our emphasis here is on electoral and legislative politics. Broadening the range of inquiry beyond our present purposes, one might expect different findings.

Female political representation in New Zealand

The increasing gender gap in economic wellbeing since the election of National in 2008, explained at the beginning of this chapter and as measured by the Global Gender Gap Index, has not created a female backlash against the National Government. Labour has appeared unable to gain traction on the traditional economic issues of importance to women. This does not bode well for women’s political representation or the promotion of gender parity in social and economic life. The current lack of progress is unexpected, given the long history of women’s involvement in New Zealand politics. At the end of the nineteenth century, New Zealand led the world as the first country in which women obtained the right to vote in general elections. Since then, New Zealand has had two female prime ministers: Jenny Shipley (National, 1997–1999) and Helen Clark (Labour, 1999–2008), and three Governors-General. Thirty per cent of Helen Clark’s first Cabinet were women, and women continue to

make up 25 per cent of John Key's Cabinet. However, so far, women have formed no more than 34 per cent of any parliament elected under the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) since 1996.³

Table 9.1: Women elected under MMP, 1996–2014

Election	Female List MPs as % List MPs	Female Electorate MPs as % Electorate MPs	Total Female MPs as % of All MPs
1996	45.5	15.4	28.3
1999	39.6	23.9	29.2
2002	29.4	27.5	28.3
2005	44.3	23.2	33.1
2008	42.3	27.1	33.6
2011	39.2	27.1	32.2
2014	32.0	31.0	31.4

Sources: www.elections.org.nz; Curtin 2014.

Table 9.1 also specifies the proportion of list and electorate MPs, an important distinction within MMP systems, in particular since electorate MPs are often considered to have more status and legitimacy than list MPs (McLeay and Vowles 2007). Since the start of MMP in 1996, women have been significantly more likely to be represented as list MPs than electorate MPs, although the differences were marginal in 2002 and after the most recent 2014 election.

The bias in the way that men and women are elected as list or electorate MPs has also been confirmed for Germany, which has a similar electoral system (Davidson-Schmich 2014). In electorate seats where only one candidate can be chosen, party selectors tend to opt for male candidates who are thought to be more likely to win a seat (Curtin 2014; Davidson-Schmich 2014). In Germany, the major political parties have adopted gender quotas for party lists, but they have not introduced a mechanism to increase the number of female candidates for electorate seats.

The gap between women's representation in list and electorate seats has narrowed since 2005. While women's share of list MPs tends to fluctuate, in recent years they have increased their representation as electorate MPs. Observing a similar trend in Germany, Davidson-Schmich (2014) suggests

³ Since the installation of parliament after the 2014 election, because of the retirement and replacement of list MPs a few changes have taken place in the composition of parliament. As of May 2016, the proportion of female MPs had increased to 33.9 per cent (N=41).

that the main reasons for this trend are the incumbency advantages that female electorate MPs experience and the openings presented when male incumbents retire. Increasingly, gender-aware parties can fill these vacancies with female candidates. While the overall percentage of female MPs was 31.4 per cent after the 2014 election, significant differences between the parties remain.

Table 9.2: Female MPs per party, 2014

Party	Number Female MPs	Percentage Female MPs
National Party	16	26.7
Labour Party	12	37.5
Green Party	7	50.0
Māori Party	1	50.0
NZ First	2	18.2
ACT	0	0.0
United Future	0	0.0

Source: www.elections.org.nz.

As can be seen from Table 9.2, women have the highest proportion of MPs within the Green Party and the Māori Party. The Green Party has a gender quota stipulating that women and men alternate up and down the order of their party list, and therefore exactly half of the MPs are women. The Māori Party had one female MP and one male MP after the 2014 election. While gender forms one of a set of its criteria in the party's candidate selection process, it does not have a formal quota. Prior to 2014, the Māori Party had only one woman MP, Tariana Turia, in a parliamentary caucus of four (in 2005), five (in 2008) and three (in 2011). Like the Green Party, the Māori Party appoints male and female co-leaders. The single MPs for both ACT NZ and United Future are male. The Internet Party failed to make any headway in the 2014 election, but it did have a female leader, former Alliance cabinet minister Laila Harré.

Of the two major parties, women are significantly better represented within the Labour Party (37.5 per cent) than within the National Party (26.7 per cent). Neither the National Party nor the Labour Party have adopted formal gender quotas, but after the introduction of MMP, the Labour Party instituted a so-called 'pause for an equity review' after each bloc of five candidates during the list selection procedure at

regional conferences (McLeay 2006). The National Party also applies the principle of balance in its nomination process, but has never applied strict alternation on its lists or introduced quotas.

Within National, the proportion of female MPs was higher among the electorate MPs than the list MPs in 2014 (respectively 29 and 21 per cent). This pattern differs from the overall pattern shown in Table 9.1: that women are more likely to be a list MP than electorate MP. Within Labour, the representation of female MPs was slightly higher among list than electorate MPs (respectively 40 and 37 per cent).

The issue of gender quotas and women's political equality was hotly debated in 2013, when the Labour Party initially proposed and then rejected the adoption of an all-women shortlist option for candidate selection in electorate seats. Following the 2011 election defeat, the party established a Selection Working Group to provide recommendations about reforming its processes, with a view to increasing women's representation as electorate candidates. The group's report drew on the experiences of the UK Labour Party's strategy of all-women shortlists to achieve gender parity in the Labour Party caucus. A constitutional remit on the issue was planned for the annual conference in November but leaked to the right-wing blog site Whale Oil in early July (Robertson 2015). A media frenzy followed, with the proposed policy labelled a 'man ban' and commentators accusing Labour of discrimination, failing to select on the basis of merit and looking 'out of touch' with its rank and file (Curtin 2013a; Small 2013; Trotter 2013). Within a week of the leak, then leader David Shearer said the party was dumping the 'quota' but would retain its target of 45 per cent female MPs in 2014, a goal that was confirmed after the leadership moved to David Cunliffe in September 2013. For the 2017 election, Labour has a target of 50 per cent female MPs, one that it will find extremely difficult to achieve without a big increase in its vote. By November 2013, pollster Gary Morgan claimed the fall-out from the party's commitment to increasing women's representation had driven men away from Labour towards National (National Business Review 2013). While male vote intentions to vote Labour had fallen back compared with the last poll, no evidence was provided of a direct link.

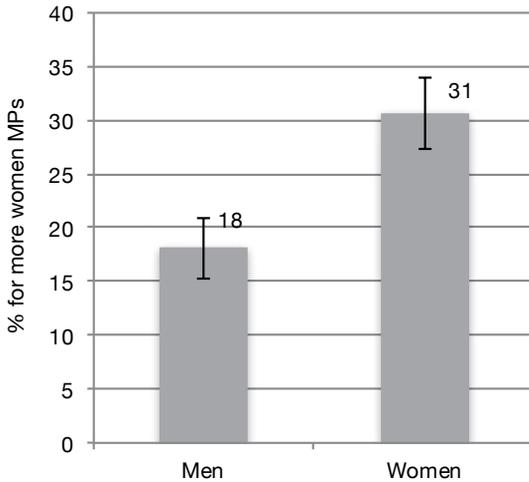


Figure 9.8: Percentage support for an increase in the number of female MPs by gender

Source: New Zealand Election Study 2014.

If there was a strong demand for greater female representation in politics, Labour's efforts to redress the balance among its MPs would be to its electoral advantage. But our data indicates that the demand that exists is relatively weak. The 2014 NZES data reveal that 24 per cent of people in New Zealand believe that there should be more women in parliament. Support for an increase in female MPs differs significantly between women and men. As can be seen from Figure 9.8, women are appreciably more likely than men to think that there should be more women in parliament. The gender gap is robust and remains significant even when various socio-economic and attitudinal characteristics such as political efficacy, and when controls are added for work and marital status.

Figure 9.9 displays an interaction effect between age and gender. We must be a little wary of it, because the confidence intervals are wide among the young, but they do not overlap significantly. The interactions indicate that both young men and young women are more likely to support increased women's representation than those who are old. The interactions also show that the gender gap is larger among the young. In particular, women and men differ more significantly in their attitudes towards the number of female MPs between those around the age of 30 than those at the age of 70. Support for greater women's representation is highest among women around the age of 20. Among this group of young women, about 50 per cent support an increase of women's representation.

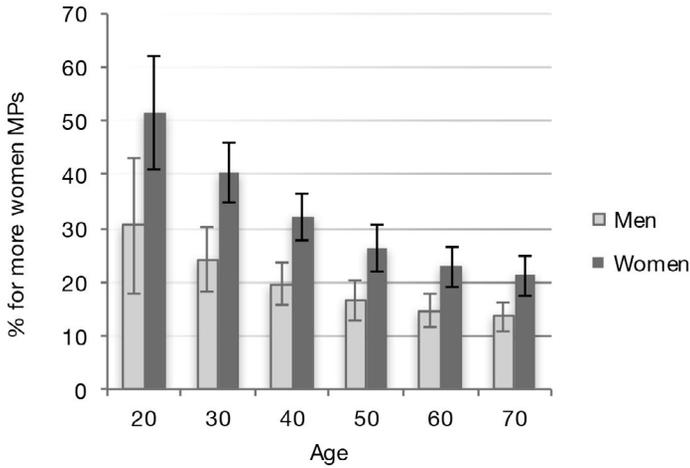


Figure 9.9: Percentage support for an increase in women’s representation by age and gender

Source: New Zealand Election Study 2014.

Support for more female MPs also varies by party vote. Table 9.3 sorts the parties by level of support for ‘more’ compared with ‘fewer or the same’ number of female MPs. With the partial exception of a reversal between Labour and the Māori Party, the relationship is largely consistent with the parties’ left–right ordering. Voters for left-leaning parties are more likely to support having more female MPs than voters for right-leaning parties.

Table 9.3: Support for more female MPs by party vote (in row percentages)

Voted	Fewer or the Same	More	N
Internet-MANA	52	48	31
Green	53	47	223
Māori	62	38	29
Labour	64	36	543
No Vote	79	21	637
NZ First	79	21	179
National	85	15	980
Conservative	88	12	82
ACT	96	4	15
Total	76	24	2,737

Source: New Zealand Election Study 2014.

One strand of theory suggests that women are socialised differently than men overall, and are thus more caring and empathetic than men (for example, Ridgeway 2011). If so, we might hypothesise that women will also be more likely to be supportive of an increase in representation for other groups who have been previously or currently marginalised or experiencing political inequality. Respondents were asked to what extent they believed that, besides women, the number of Asians, Pacific Islanders and Māori in parliament should be increased.

As can be seen from Figure 9.10, women only tend to show greater support for an increase of Māori MPs. They do not differ significantly from men in their support to increase the number of Asian or Pacific MPs—two ethnic groups whose presence, as a percentage of the population, has increased markedly in New Zealand society over the last couple of decades, but, particularly in the case of Asians, still lags behind in terms of representation in parliament. Women are significantly less likely to favour an increase in Asian MPs than for the other groups, while men are indifferent between the various ethnic groups.

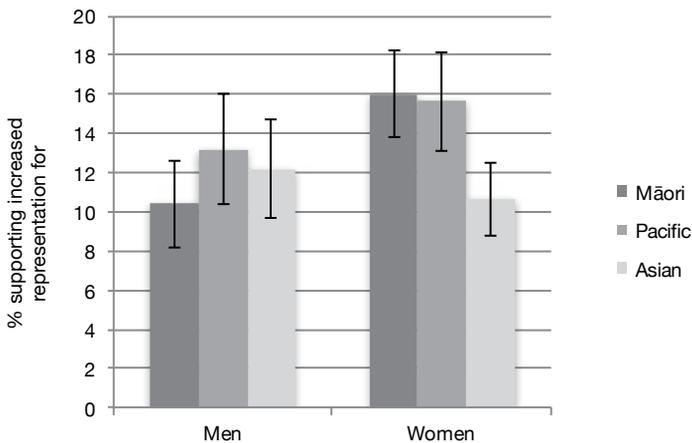


Figure 9.10: Percentage support for an increase in the number of various ethnic groups in parliament by gender

Source: New Zealand Election Study 2014.

Turning to the question of the extent to which people believe that more should be done to increase the number of female MPs and, if so, what should be done, Table 9.4 shows that a vast majority (61 per cent), believe that nothing should be done. They believe that there is no need to increase the number of female MPs, or that the number of female MPs

will increase naturally. Here, too, substantial gender differences occur. Whereas more than 70 per cent of men believe that no effort should be done to increase the number of female MPs, 54 per cent of women believe that there is no need to increase the number of female MPs or that the increase of the number of female MPs will happen naturally. Figure 9.13 displays the data visually with confidence intervals. As with attitudes to women's representation more generally, the gender effect remains robust to a battery of controls.

Among those who believe that initiatives should be taken to increase the number of women in parliament, the 2014 NZES further shows that most believe that this should be achieved by encouraging more women to participate in politics (see Table 9.4 and Figure 9.11). The second most popular way to improve women's representation is by letting political parties make their own voluntary commitments to increase the number of female MPs. A small group, among both women and men, would prefer to legally require all political parties to select more women candidates by means of a 'quota'. Nonetheless, there is significant resistance towards the introduction of a quota; support is low among both women and men. In line with previous international research (Barnes and Córdova 2016; Gidengil 1998), it is significantly higher among women compared with men. As for overall support for the increase of female MPs discussed above, this gender gap may be due to both women's self-interest or more pro-social attitudes among women (Barnes and Córdova 2016).

Table 9.4: Percentage support for initiatives to increase women's representation in parliament by gender

	Men	Women	Total
No need to increase	19	12	15
Will happen naturally	51	42	46
Encourage women	21	29	25
Voluntary quota	7	12	9
Quota	2	6	4
N	1,350	1,485	2,835

Source: New Zealand Election Study 2014.

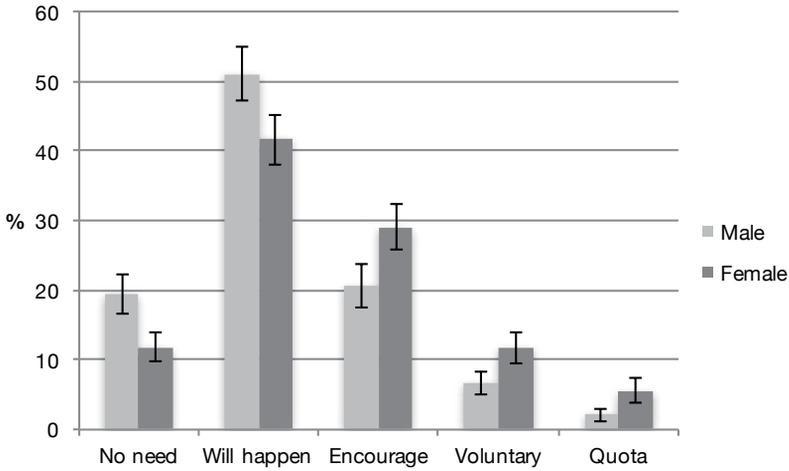


Figure 9.11: Percentage support for initiatives to increase women's representation in parliament by gender

Source: New Zealand Election Study 2014.

As significant differences exist between parties in the representation of female MPs (see Table 9.2), and in the initiatives they have taken to increase women's representation, we therefore expect to see differences between their voters in support for an increase of female MPs, and how this should be achieved. Table 9.5 reveals that compared with National voters, Labour and in particular Green voters are more likely to agree that efforts should be done to increase the number of female MPs. The support for legally requiring all political parties to select female candidates by means of a quota is small, even among Labour and Green voters. Even though the Green Party has gender quotas aiming at an equal representation of women and men, there is limited support among Green voters for a legal requirement that all political parties select female candidates by means of a quota. There is substantial support among Green voters for the idea that political parties should make their own voluntary commitments to increase the number of female MPs. Among all voters of all parties who believe that efforts should be taken to increase the number of female MPs, encouraging more women to participate in politics receives the greatest support.

Table 9.5: Women's representation options by percentages of party voters

% by Row	No Need	Will Happen	Encourage	Voluntary	Full quota	Don't Know	N
No Vote	11	37	22	9	5	16	635
Labour	13	31	33	11	6	6	537
National	19	45	23	7	2	4	964
Green	8	27	38	18	5	4	220
NZ First	22	43	19	8	5	4	176
Māori	14	28	31	12	5	11	28
Internet-MANA	17	24	33	20	6	1	30
Conservative	36	38	16	8	0	3	80
All	17	37	27	11	4	4	2,707

Source: New Zealand Election Study 2014.

Conclusion

We find small differences in the party choices of women and men in the 2014 election. On the margins, women are more likely to be on the left and men on the right, but this applies only to the relatively small groups who are furthest to the left or right. This is a pattern that was apparent as long as 25 years ago. Recent gender differences in party choices between the Labour and National parties have subsided from 2011 onwards. This contrasts with studies of other post-industrial societies where women are still found to be significantly more left-leaning than men. Women are significantly more likely to vote Green, a gap that can be accounted for by age, education and environmental attitudes. Men are more likely to vote for a bundle of conservative parties (ACT, New Zealand First and the Conservative Party) when put together, and similar controls do not reduce their tendency to do so.

We find that women are somewhat more to the left on the environment and on the Treaty of Waitangi; in the case of the Treaty, this is particularly so for younger women. Women tend to favour more expenditure than men do on universal benefits such as health, education and New Zealand Superannuation, particularly women between the ages of 40 and 60. The only gender difference apparent for targeted benefits for the unemployed and welfare beneficiaries is for younger women, who are significantly more in favour of higher expenditure than the middle-aged women and men. In line with international research, we find lower levels of political interest

and knowledge among women. But this does not make them less likely to turn out to vote. Our findings also show that women are more likely to say that they do not know the answer on some political knowledge questions, and that allowing for this narrows but does not close the gap.

New Zealand was the first country that gave women the right to vote in general elections, and it has had two female prime ministers since 1997. In addition, in 1999 the two major party leaders were women and competed against each other in the election of that year. Since 2011, both major party leaders have been men. After the introduction of MMP delivered a boost in women's parliamentary representation, the overall representation of women in the New Zealand Parliament has stalled at around 30 per cent since 1996. There has been no significant increase over the last 20 years. One explanation is obvious: there have been no quotas to ensure woman MPs are selected, except within the Green party. There also does not seem to be strong support for quotas among New Zealanders, though the support is stronger among women than men, and younger women in particular. Along with greater support for the Treaty of Waitangi, women also tend to be more in favour of increased Māori representation than men, but have less support for increased representation of other ethnic groups, in regard to which they do not differ significantly from men.

Our findings echo some of the findings that have been found elsewhere, but we do not find any evidence to confirm that work and marital status account for gender differences, at least not at this point in time. We do, however, find considerable evidence that gender effects interact with age, indicating that women may respond to political socialisation and political events in different ways than men. There is some evidence of self-interest and some for greater vulnerability, particularly among younger women.

This text is taken from *A Bark But No Bite: Inequality and the 2014 New Zealand General Election*, by Jack Vowles, Hilde Coffé and Jennifer Curtin, published 2017 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.