**WOMEN’S RIGHTS AS A KEY TO CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION**

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### RESEARCH QUESTION

Is the global advancement of women’s rights a critical factor in mitigating the detrimental impacts of climate change?

### INTRODUCTION

- The impacts of climate change will fall unevenly along the lines of gender, class, and race.
- Gender related studies of climate change have revealed the higher vulnerability of women in the developing world who already make up a severely marginalized portion of the population (Denton 2002; Sultana 2014).
- The number of women in parliament has a strong correlation with gender related studies of climate change (Ergas and York 2012; McKinnley and Fulkerson 2015; Norgaard and York 2005).
- Gendered division of work especially evident in the developing world where women are often positioned as subsistence laborers, water and fuelwood collectors, and caregivers whose labor is dependent on access to natural resources will significantly contribute to the unequal impacts of climate change (Ergas and York 2012; Sultana 2014).
- World-systems position and women’s status within nations are strongly correlated suggesting that gender is a significant variable in systems processes (York and Ergas 2011).
- CEDAW has a strong positive influence on the status of women and state respect of women’s rights (Cole 2013).

### THEOREY

**Ecofeminism**

Ties gender discrimination and environmental degradation to a patriarchal social structure that devalues both women and the environment.

**Feminist Political Ecology**

Gender plays a role in individual access to and dependency on natural resources, knowledge of environmental threats and impacts, and ability to create change.

**World Polity Theory**

Focus on cultural impacts and the forces of “modernity” on interactions between nation-states.

**World Systems Theory**

Focus on macro-level economic variables such as GDP, national debt, foreign direct investment, and trade networks.

### METHODS

#### Hypothesis:

Countries with higher levels of women’s empowerment will strongly correlate with lower time till ratification of significant environmental treaties (e.g. the Paris Agreement) regarding climate change.

#### Independent Variable:

Women’s empowerment measured by ratification of CEDAW and state compliance to treaty principles regarding the social, economic, and political rights of women.

- **CEDAW Scale:** This scale ranks the degree to which the nation has committed itself to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- **Representation Scale:** Ordinal Ranking of the Degree of Representation by Women in National Government. Examines primarily the national legislature and cabinet positions as in GP DATA 1; information on the judiciary was not included because so little is available.
- **Law/Discrepancy Scale:** This scale has three sub-clusters: Right to Physical Security/Body Integrity, Right to Education, and Rights within the Family.

#### Dependent Variable:

Environmental outcomes and state efforts to curb the impacts of climate change measured by time till ratification of significant environmental treaties.

#### Modeling:

Survival analysis based on time till ratification of Paris Treaty Agreement

### FINDINGS

**Summarized Results of Models Predicting (Days) Until Ratification of the Paris Climate Agreement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>All Countries</th>
<th>High Income Countries</th>
<th>Not High Income Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita (logged)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO2 per capita (logged)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Growth</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time until CEDAW ratification</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW scale</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation Scale</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law/Discrepancy Scale</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls out of primary school</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INGO (logged)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental NGO (logged)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO2 (logged)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key:**

- **+** Increases likelihood of ratification
- **-** Decreases likelihood of ratification
- **X** Not statistically significant

### CONCLUSIONS

- GDP per capita increased the likelihood of ratification and shortened the time until ratification of the Paris Climate Agreement.
- CO2 emissions per capita and population growth decreased the likelihood and increased the time until ratification.
- We did not find support for our key hypothesis that the indicators of women’s status, which we tested, had a significant effect on time to ratification of the Paris Climate Agreement.
- We found robust findings for the variable of population growth which is, however, related to women’s status.
- Population growth relates to women’s status and state efforts to curb environmental threats and mitigate climate change.
- Supporting the theory that women’s reproductive rights may have a positive impact on climate change mitigation.
- These findings also support the theoretical perspectives of ecofeminism and feminist political ecology.

### REFERENCES


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