

When Women Take the Lead: Exploring the Intersection Between Gender Equality and Women's Environmental Political Engagement from a Comparative Perspective

Authors : Summer Isaacson

Abstract : Research on gender differences in environmental behavior has long claimed that women engage less than men in environmental political participation (EPP) (protests, petitions), despite their higher levels of environmental concern and vulnerability. Using recent data from the ISSP's 2020 Environment module including 28 countries, we revisit the gender gap in EPP. Arguing that increasing gender equality and socio-economic development can allow women to voice their environmental grievances, we use multi-level models to examine the effects of macro-level gender equality on gender differences in environmental protests, petitions, and boycotts. By distinguishing individual from collective and non-confrontational from confrontational engagement forms, this study offers an encompassing understanding of gendered patterns of participation. Women do participate more than men, but mainly in individual and non-confrontational EPP forms (petitions, boycotts) and with substantial variation across countries. Moreover, considering how women have historically been restrained from participating in politics, we argue that structural gender inequality remains an important limitation to women's engagement. Cross-level interactions indicate that in more egalitarian countries, women are more likely to engage in several types of EPP than men. The study offers new perspectives and findings on gender differences in EPP, highlighting the impact of gender inequality on women's participation.

Keywords : environmental activism, political participation, gender equality, pro-environmental behavior

Conference Title : ICEP 2025 : International Conference on Environmental Psychology

Conference Location : Barcelona, Spain

Conference Dates : February 11-12, 2025