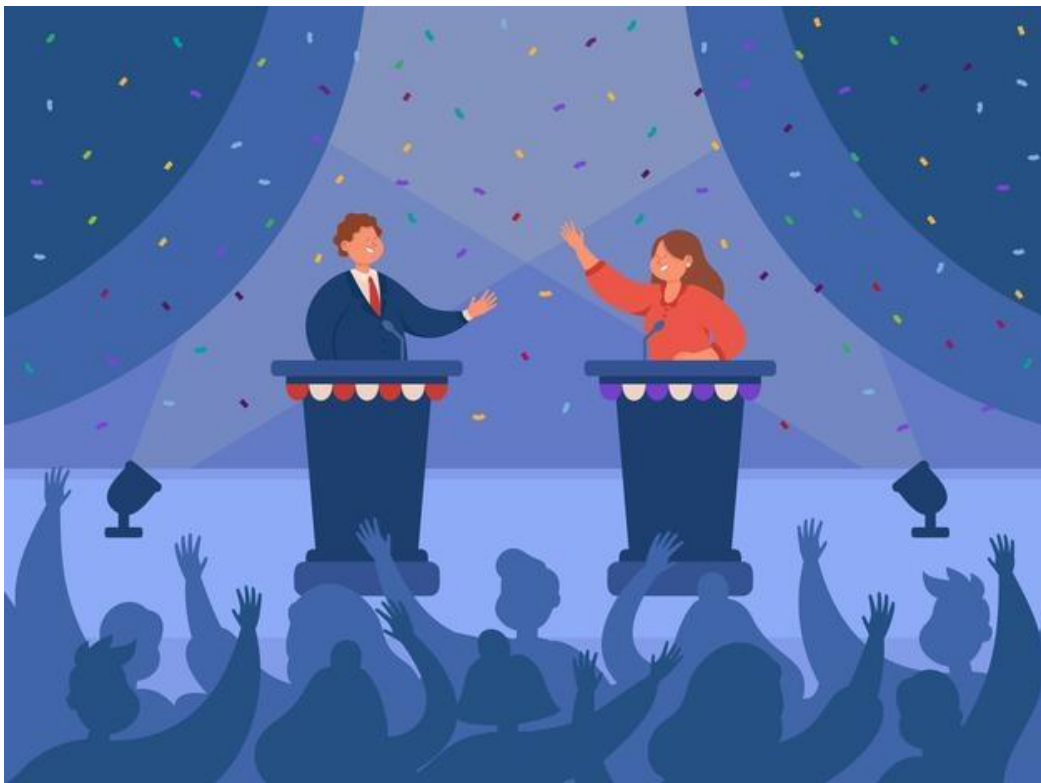


Lecture Note

Gender Economics (EE364)

Chapter 6: The role of women in society, economy and politics



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Chapter 6

The role of women in society, economy, and politics

6.1. The role of women in society, the economy, and politics

Blau and Winkler (2018) mentioned that women's roles change over time and change the nature of society. Several factors determined the women's roles, including (1) The role in production is determined by the level of technology society uses to produce daily essentials. In agricultural societies, labor is needed in production. Men tend to provide the labor in agricultural areas, while women work in the households; (2) Participation (or opportunities to participate) in activities outside the household (public space or sphere). Society allows women to play a role in public spaces, improving their status in that society.

The role of women in Thai society – Since 1867, in the reigns of King Rama IV, V, and VI, the term “modernity” has been used by European countries. Concepts and practices have changed from a male-dominated society to address the issue of equality, such as having only one husband and wife. National reforms, especially in education during the reign of King Rama V, gave women the right to study. After World War II, an image of a Thai woman was created to serve nationalist ideology. The state makes an image of a “good Thai woman” who upholds the virtues of family and nation as a good mother and wife.

The National Economic and Social Development Plan No. 1 (1961) provided opportunities for women to enter the labor market and play a more significant role in the economy. The government's promotion of female participation in the labor market drove Thai women to play a more substantial role in society. The concept of rights, liberties, and equality according to the gender equality principle “Men and women have equal rights” first appeared in the 1974 Thai Constitution. Furthermore, Thailand developed from an agricultural to a manufacturing economy (high labor demand). An increasing number of women are entering the labor market and are considered a vital part of the economy.

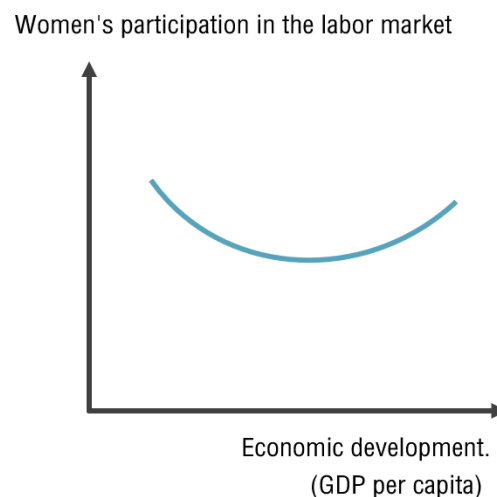
Before the 1997 economic crisis, labor migrated from rural areas to cities (or urban areas) to serve a highly industrialized economy. Furthermore, there was a movement for women's rights with a 90-day maternity leave law in 1993. This movement led to the enactment of Article 53 of the 1997 Constitution to protect family members from violence and unfair treatment. Several international agreements Thailand signed to endorse gender equality in the country, for example, the Convention on the Elimination of The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); Beijing Declaration, and Action

Plan Declaration on the Advancement of Women in the ASEAN Region; and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the ASEAN Region.

6.2 The role of women and the level of economic development

U-Shape relationship - The role of women's participation in economic development varies from country to country. Differences in economic growth, social norms, education level, fertility rate, access to childcare, and other support services. Goldin (1995) stated that the relationship between women's labor market participation and economic development is U-shape. The level of development is measured by GDP per capita (Gross Domestic Product per capita). The role of women in economic development is measured by the participation rate in the labor market (or female labor force participation).

Figure 6.1 – U-Shape relationship between women's participation in the labor market and economic development.



Source: Blau and Winkler (2018)

Why is the relationship U-shape? - Women's participation rates are highest in poor countries, where they are required to participate in economic activities for subsistence. Economic participation is high during the early stages of development. During this time, women are workers or help in farming areas or in the household business (paid or unpaid household production).

During the declining range of the U-line, the level of economic development changed from household to non-household production, and there was a shift in employment to earn

wages. Basic economic concepts can be used to explain this stage. The level of economic development increases, but women's participation in the labor market decreases.

- **The income effect** - a change in women's labor supply is related to changes in household income. An increase in household income is due to the increasing level of economic development. This led to a rise in demand for household goods. Households have increased utility. A wife's welfare may increase without participating in the labor market. This makes women less likely to participate in the labor market.
- **Substitution effect** - A change in women's labor supply is related to changes in the wages received in the labor market. An increase in wages increases the opportunity cost of staying at home. As a result, women are more likely to participate in the labor market. Women's participation in the market (declining range of the U-line) may decrease based on household income. The income effect is very high according to the level of economic development and reduced participation in the labor market.

Later, as economic development progresses, the education level improves, and women can work as part of highly skilled groups. Participation in the labor market will also increase (increasing range along the U-line). Due to higher wages resulting in an increased substitution effect, more women join the labor force. Female participation rates increase alongside higher levels of development. Goldin (1995) also mentioned that social norm is one determinant of married women's participation in the labor market. In some societies, if the wife works, her husband will be considered a "poor provider."

However, trends in female labor force participation are diverse. Over the past two decades, the global female workforce participation rate (age 15 years and older) has declined despite significant growth in emerging and developing countries (51.3 % in 1998 to 48.5% in 2018). The gender gap narrowed slightly from 27.5% in 1998 to 26.6% in 2018. The participation of women varies significantly in developing countries.

For example, the rate in Southeast Asia is high because countries experienced a high level of economic development during the 20th century, with a shift in focus from agriculture to manufacturing and the expansion of educational opportunities. However, South Asian countries have low participation rates and are very diverse. The attendance rate is around 30% in Pakistan and India, while as high as 80% in Nepal.

The U-shape concept is not applied in all countries. For example, Bangladesh is a low-income country. The economy grew through developments in the garment industry; however, the female workforce participation rate increased from 23.9% in 1990 to 36.0% in 2010. In

contrast, India's female workforce participation rate is unexplained trends; for example, the female participation rate dropped from 34.1% in 2000 to 27.2% in 2010.

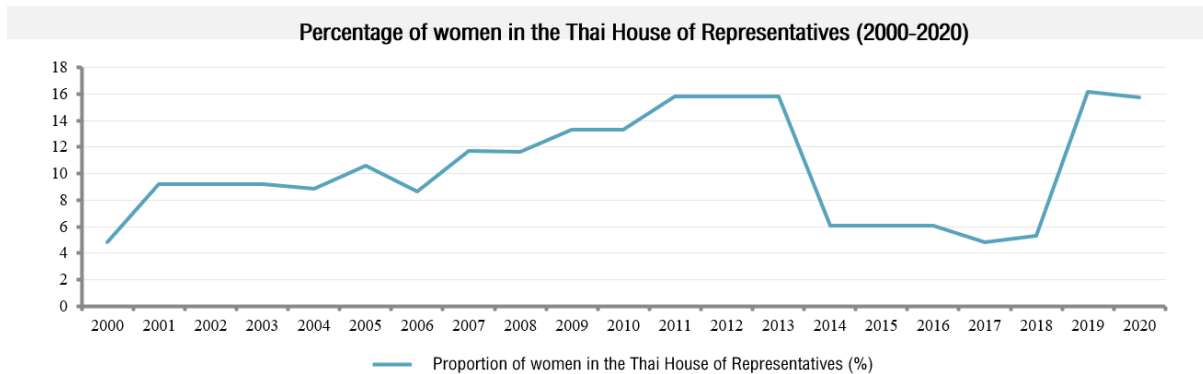
Criticism of women's participation - Verick (2014) mentioned that "Participation is only part of the picture: The quality of employment also matters" or, the nature of women's work. In developing countries, the labor force participation rates between men and women are not significantly different. But there are inequalities in terms of quality of employment and job opportunities. Women tend to have lower wages than men. There was a gender wage gap. Most of the female workers were also unpaid family workers.

6.3 The role of women in politics

Women in politics 2021 map - The "Women in politics: 2021" map was created by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women. This presents the global ranking of the number of women in executive, government, and parliamentary positions as of January 1, 2021. The data shows a record for the number of women-led countries and the proportion of women serving as ministers worldwide.

Despite the increase in the number of women with the highest levels of political power, but gender inequality persists. Women's progress in ministerial positions has slowed with a slight increase from 21.3% in 2020 to 21.9% in 2021. The number of countries with no women in government has increased, and only 25.5% of national parliamentarians are women, compared to 24.9% a year ago. 87 countries had female leaders. Currently, there are 23 female leaders worldwide (Germany, United Kingdom, Iceland, Norway, New Zealand, Ethiopia, etc.). The highest record for female leaders is in key political positions during this period.

In Thailand, based on data on the proportion of women's participation in political areas from IPU as of January 1, 2021. They are considering the number of seats in both the House of Representatives and the Senate (As of 1 October 2020). Thailand has only 5.3% of women in the House of Representatives, ranking 10th behind all ASEAN countries and ranks 184th in the world. The 1st place went to Rwanda, where women sit in 49/80 seats, or 61.3%, followed by Cuba and Bolivia. Meanwhile, the last few countries are Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and Yemen, where no single woman is in the members of parliament. Thai women remain underrepresented in terms of political participation. Of the 35 ministers, only three were women (accounting for 8.6% of the cabinet), while there was only one female governor in Phrae, one of 77 provinces.

Figure 6.2 – Percentage of women in the Thai House of Representatives (2000-2020)

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), 2020.

The percentage of Thai women in parliament is low compared to other countries. The recent information on the number of women in parliament from the IPU (2020), which publishes the percentage ranking of women in parliament (as of October 1, 2020). Thailand has only 15.7% of the House of Representatives (77) of the 489 members of parliament, and 10.4% of the senators are women - just 26 of the 250 senators (as of May 2019). Of the 35 ministers, only three were female (accounting for 8.6 percent of the Cabinet).

Table 6.1 – Percentage of women in parliament (as of October 1, 2020)

Country/Region	Lower chamber and unicameral	Upper chamber	Average
Thailand	15.7	10.4	13.05
Malaysia	14.9	19.1	17.0
Philippines	28	29.2	28.6
Asia	20.6	17.4	20.2
South East Asia	20.6	13.2	19.3
Global	25.2	24.8	25.1

Source: Parline database on national parliaments (<https://data.ipu.org>).

Thai women now have an increasing role in the business sector, but the number of women in parliament has declined because of various restrictions and conditions. According to Pailin Phuchinaphun (2020), The number of women in parliament has decreased because of different restrictions and conditions. Churi Vichitvatakarn said the reason for the decline stemmed from the structure of the political party. It was found that most political positions in the past were occupied by men, unlike the business sector, where women involved from the

beginning. Historically, along with men, Thai women have had the right to vote in the election of members of the House of Representatives since 1932. However, the development of women's roles in national politics and access to parliament has been slow.

The number of women holding political offices is very small. The efforts have been made to enforce gender quota systems for political participation. During the 2017 constitution drafting process, there was a discussion on the gender quota system (DWF, 2020). Finally, Article 90 of the 2017 Constitution states women's political participation and decision-making and requires that political parties consider gender equality in preparing their list of candidates. However, it is voluntary and not regulated.

6.4 Women and corruption

Women and corruption - Dollar, Fisman, Gatti (2001) provide empirical evidence to determine the relationship between the number of women in parliament and the level of corruption. This paper examines the relationship between women's participation in parliament and the perceived level of corruption in a sample of more than 100 countries. The key variable used as the main measure of corruption is the International Country Risk Guide's corruption index (ICRG). The measure of women's participation in government is based on a survey of Inter-parliamentary Union's survey of Women in Parliaments 1945-1995. The degree of corruption and political opportunity for women would be affected by the level of overall social and economic development of the country.

The main finding is the inverse relationship between the percentage of women in parliament and the level of perception of corruption. A higher proportion of women is associated with a lower level of corruption. Increasing the number of women and encouraging women to play a higher role also promotes gender equality. In addition, the presence of more women representatives, or bringing more women into politics will benefit society as a whole.

Over the past few decades, several studies found systematic differences in the behavioral characteristics of different sexes. The basic assumption proposed by several studies. Men are more selfish than women. Women are more likely to exhibit "helping" behaviors (Eagly and Crowley, 1986), vote concerning social outcomes (Goertzel, 1983), have high scores for honesty (Ones and Viswesvaran, 1998), ethics (Glover et al, 1997; Reiss and Mitra, 1998), generosity (Eckel and Grossman, 1998). To sum up, social science research indicates that women may have higher standards of ethical behavior and focus on social benefit, which can link the role of women in government and development.

After Dollar et al. (2001), governments of various countries paid attention to promoting gender roles and implementing policies promoting the role of women in politics. The gender quota system has become popular. Today, more than half of the countries in the world use gender quotas as a tool to increase the number of women involved in politics (Bonomi et al., 2013).

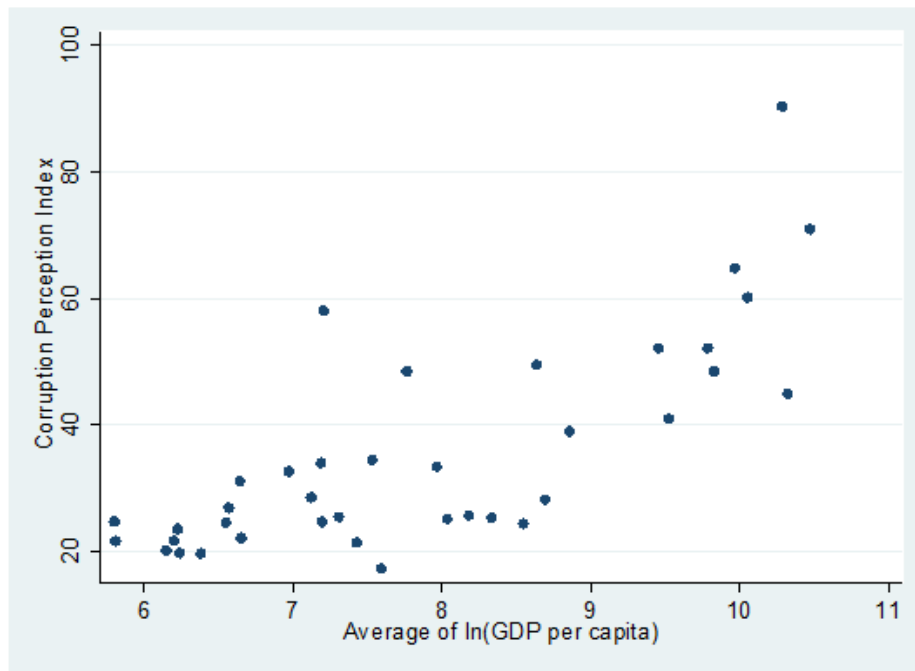
However, the results of studies on women and corruption vary greatly (based on time period and country). Sung (2003) and Goetz (2007) did not find a relationship between women and corruption. It also stated that the system was a matter, not gender. Shukralla and Allan (2011) added the foreign aid variable and found that women in parliament or foreign aid had no effect on corruption. Samimi and Hosseinmardi (2011) stated that the involvement of women in parliament affects corruption, including an increase in the workforce and other social factors (such as the Human Development Index (HDI)), democracy will help reduce corruption. Ades and Di Tella (1999) found that countries with high levels of trade openness showed low levels of corruption.

Women and corruption in Asia - Paweenawat (2018) provides empirical evidence to determine the relationship between the number of women in parliament and the level of corruption in Asian countries. The main finding confirmed the inverse relationship between the number of women in parliament and the level of corruption. The gender quota is taken into account in this study.

Paweenawat (2018) mentioned that several empirical studies indicate that levels of corruption decline as more women hold office in parliament at the national level. Although the number of women in parliament and women's leadership roles in Asian countries has increased dramatically over the past 30 years, the region continues to suffer from corruption, which is a major obstacle to the country's development in this region. Therefore, she studies the relationship between the percentage of women in parliament and the level of corruption with an emphasis on Asian countries in the period 1997–2015.

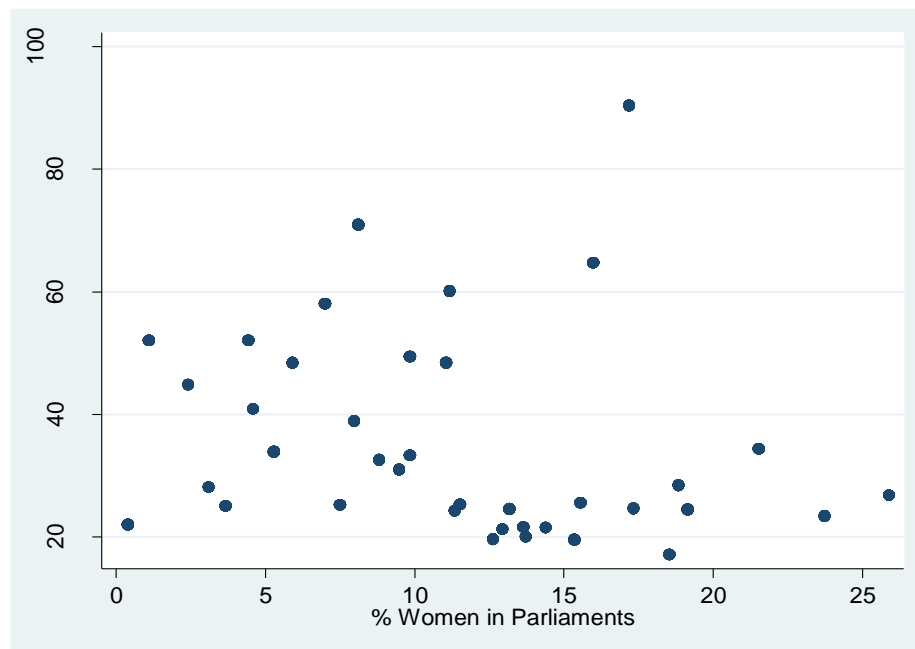
Results show the inverse relationship between the share of women in parliament and the level of corruption. Increasing women's political participation can reduce the level of corruption in Asian countries. The results are consistent with the findings of Dollar et al. (2001). The situation in Asian countries support the policy on promoting women as the key mechanisms in reducing corruption. Policies that support the role of women in politics, such as gender quotas, should be widely promoted and implemented in regional countries as they are an important tool in developing women's roles in society.

Figure 6.3 – Corruption and Economic Growth - “Asian Paradox”



Source: Paweenawat (2018)

Figure 6.4 – Corruption and the number of women in parliament



Source: Paweenawat (2018)

Women's quota in politics (Gender Quota) - Gender Quota is the fixed percentage or percentage of women in politics at all levels (national, community, or local level), as well as in political parties, to give women more opportunities and increase the number of women in politics. Dahlerup (2003) mentioned the reasons to place a quota system. The population of women is greater than that of men. Women have different physical characteristics and social experiences than men. Being an agent can make a difference. Women and men have different needs/preferences for benefits, so adding diversity will cover all the benefits the society should have.

Gender Quota [International IDEA] (2009) could be classified into 3 categories:

1) Voluntary quotas - Voluntary quotas are initiated by political parties (to determine the proportion of nominated political candidates which must be 20-50%) women.

2) Legislative quotas - Legal quotas require political parties to nominate a minimum percentage of female candidates.

3) Reserved seats - Reserved seats present the number of seats in parliament reserved for women such as 10-20% of seats are reserved for women.

Lessons learned from using the gender quota system - Before 1995, only two countries, Argentina and Nepal, had a membership quota system. Women-men in elections, currently 81 countries use this quota system. Quotas are a key factor in the advancement of women's participation in politics. In 16 Parliaments (out of the top 20 countries) with the highest percentage of women in parliament in 2020, certain types of gender quota systems have been used in elections. At least 40% of women are members of parliament in 28 countries around the world, that used the gender quota system. The quota system requires other measures, such as incentivizing political parties to recruit and nominate women. The campaign highlights the importance of gender equality in politics.

Women's quota in politics in ASEAN (Pailin Phuchinaphun, 2020) - ASEAN countries have a quota system for women in the form of stipulating that political parties have guidelines for the allocation of quotas for women (Volunteer Party Quotas). Gender quota is a guide only, but there are no regulations like in the Philippines and Thailand. Indonesia is specified in the political party law. It is legal quotas (Legislative quotas). The number of candidates for the election is at least 30 percent of all candidates. If this is not the case the party will be fined although still able to compete in the election.

Exercise

- 1) Describe the relationship between women's participation in the labor market and the level of economic development characterized by the U-shaped model according to Goldin (1995) based on the economic concepts of the income and substitution effects. Provide examples of countries in your discussion and indicate whether or not the relationship is U-shaped.
- 2) A study by Verick (2014) stated, "Participation is only part of the picture: The quality of employment also matters." Discuss what you think of the following statement. Do you agree or disagree, and why?
- 3) Thai women remain underrepresented in terms of their political participation. What are the main obstacles women face in Thai politics? How can the proportion of women be increased? To this end, what policies can be implemented?
- 4) According to the Paweenawat (2018) study, policies supporting the role of women in politics, such as gender quotas, should be widely promoted and implemented in countries as an important tool for improving women's societal role. Give examples of countries wherein this policy has been successfully implemented.
- 5) From the article Women in Parliament (Inter-parliamentary Union, 2021), which compiles the results of the use of gender quotas in the politics of countries. Is the quota policy appropriate to apply in Thailand or not? Discuss with examples.
(https://www.parliament.go.th/ewtadmin/ewt/parliament_parcy/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=77208&filename=index)
- 6) Based on the issue of implementing a gender quota to increase women's political participation, give an example of a situation in countries using voluntary quotas, legislative quotas, and reserved seats. Were the desired results achieved based on using this quota system? Why or why not?

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