# Win For Women or Dynasties?

# Consequences of Gender Quotas in Taiwan

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**Abstract**

What are the consequences of gender quotas? This paper investigates the descriptive and substantive impact of Taiwan's gender quota rule in local council elections. The findings show that the quotas not only increased women's descriptive representation but also elevated the presence of dynastic politicians. Leveraging a regression discontinuity design based on the quota thresholds, I provide causal evidence of these shifts in representation. The interplay between a candidate-centered electoral system and a one-quarter gender quota has improved the electoral viability of dynastic candidates and motivated major parties to recruit from political families, thereby reinforcing their dominance in local politics. In addition, I find that gender quotas enhance substantive representation even when they benefit political groups traditionally perceived as disengaged from women's issues. The growing number of legislative speeches and bill proposals on women's issues suggests a shift toward a greater focus on women's issues in policymaking.

**Keywords:** Gender Quota, Political Dynasty, Descriptive Representation, Substantive Representation, Regression Discontinuity

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# 1 Introduction

Gender representation in politics has become a central issue across the globe, with many countries seeking to address the persistent underrepresentation of women. Gender quotas are a commonly used mechanism to increase the number of female candidates in political decision-making bodies. More than 100 countries have implemented some form of quota system, either through legal mandates or through voluntary adoption by political parties (Krook, 2009; Wängnerud, 2009; Verge and Wiesehomeier, 2019).

While gender quotas are generally intended to advance women's rights by improving their descriptive representation, this objective is not always fully realized. The effects of quota policies, both in terms of descriptive and substantive representation, vary considerably across countries. These outcomes often depend on the interaction between the quota design and the electoral system. In some cases, this interaction can significantly enhance both forms of representation, whereas in others, it may improve descriptive representation while limiting substantive gains (Clayton, 2021; Meguid et al., 2025). Whether and how the number of women in legislatures (descriptive representation) influences the promotion of women's policy interests (substantive representation) has long been a central focus in the study of gender and politics (Mansbridge, 2003; O'Brien and Piscopo, 2019).

In this paper, I assess how gender quotas shaped political selection and representation in Taiwan's local councils. I ask which types of politicians benefited from the quota and whether these groups contributed to substantive representation. The population-based formula used to allocate reserved seats produces sharp institutional cutoffs, enabling a credible regression discontinuity design that identifies the causal effects of gender quotas. The results show that the introduction of gender quotas increased the descriptive

representation of women.[1] At the same time, the quota law facilitated the rise of dynastic politicians, defined as "politicians who are related by blood or marriage to other individuals formerly holding political office" (Dal Bó et al., 2009; Geys and Smith, 2017). The interaction between the quota and Taiwan's candidate-centered SNTV-MMD system incentivized parties to nominate dynastic women who possess an electoral advantage in quota districts. Because dynasties are unevenly distributed across parties, these incentives can strengthen dominant parties and lead to less competitive electoral environments.

A central question is whether the influx of women, including women from political families, translates into substantive representation. Conventional wisdom suggests that dynastic politicians are weakly connected to gender-focused issues and may lack motivation to champion women's interests. Taiwan's political landscape offers an opportunity to evaluate this claim. I analyze council minutes to measure substantive outcomes and find that constituencies with gender quotas see a higher incidence of bills and speeches related to women's issues.[2] Crucially, my findings reveal heterogeneity in who drives these substantive effects. While non-dynastic women are the most active, female dynasts also contribute more to women-related policymaking than their male counterparts. In other words, even though dynastic women may be less engaged than non-dynastic women, their presence still expands substantive representation relative to a scenario dominated by men. This suggests that increasing the number of women—even among traditionally less gender-focused political families—can elevate the salience of women's issues and produce meaningful substantive gains.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. I first review the related literature in

[1] The term "local council" here refers to municipality, city, and county councils.

[2] In Taiwan, local councilors are primarily responsible for overseeing local governments and reviewing budgets through bill proposals and public speeches. Local governments have limited authority to amend regulations, as most laws are enacted at the national level (Tsui et al., 2024).

the next section. In Section 3, I provide background information on the origins of the current state of gender quotas and political dynasties in Taiwan. In Section 4, I describe the data and the empirical strategy. Section 5 discusses the impact of the gender quota on women and dynastic representation. Section 6 illustrates the policy outcomes resulting from the increased participation of dynastic politicians in politics, and the last section is the conclusion.

# 2 Implication of Gender Quotas

## 2.1 Descriptive and Substantive Representation

Numerous studies have documented improvements in women's descriptive representation following the adoption of gender quotas (Tripp and Kang, 2008; Jones, 2009; Paxton and Hughes, 2015; Dahlerup, 2013; Hughes, 2011; Krook, 2009). Although many of these works find positive effects on women's legislative presence, the magnitude of these effects varies with the design of quota rules and the timing of their implementation. For example, Paxton and Hughes (2015) shows that reserved seat quotas, which guarantee a minimum share of seats for women, are more effective in increasing women's representation than candidate quotas that regulate only the composition of party lists. Their research also demonstrates that the positive impact of quotas on descriptive representation strengthens over time as norms surrounding women's political inclusion change. Schwindt-Bayer (2009) further identifies several institutional features that shape quota effectiveness, including the required proportion of women candidates, the placement of women in electable positions on party lists, and the presence of sanctions for noncompliance.

Another important question is whether gender quotas consistently motivate politicians

to advocate for more women-friendly or gender-equal policies. As previous studies show, male and female politicians often hold different policy preferences (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Beaman et al., 2009). Thus, an increase in the number of women politicians may shift the policy agenda. Most existing studies find that the introduction of quotas can enhance the substantive representation of women (Hughes et al., 2017; Wängnerud, 2009; Pearson and Dancey, 2011; Celis, 2007; Dodson, 2006; Esaiasson and Heidar, 2000; Hogan, 2008; Reingold, 1992; Swers, 2002; Thomas, 1994; Carey et al., 1998; Clayton and Zetterberg, 2018; Weeks, 2019; Wang, 2023; Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004).

There are several explanations for how quotas influence substantive representation. Clayton (2021) argues that increasing the number of women can either enhance the flow of information or allow women to play a more essential role in decision-making bodies. The "providing more information" mechanism refers not only to the idea that having more women in councils increases overall awareness of women-related issues but also to the effect that the presence of more women motivates male councilors to recognize the need to care about these issues as well. To be more specific, women are more likely to advocate for women's interests because they share similar life experiences, which provide a deeper understanding of women's needs and perspectives (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008; Wängnerud, 2000; Wängnerud, 2009).

As for the "essential role" mechanism, it means that when women hold key positions in councils or parties, they gain greater power over agenda-setting, which enables them to prioritize legislation related to women's issues. Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004)'s study provides empirical evidence for this mechanism. They examine the consequences of mandated representation of women in Indian village council leadership. When women serve as village council heads, they tend to prioritize different types of public goods, such

as drinking water and roads, compared with their male counterparts.

However, some studies indicate that a rise in descriptive representation does not necessarily result in greater substantive representation. For example, Weeks and Masala (2023) argue that a higher proportion of women in Italian parliament does not automatically translate into substantive policy change, largely due to structural barriers within the policymaking process that limit their ability to represent women's interests effectively. Bailer et al. (2021) find that the policy priorities of politicians who represent marginalized groups may shift over time. For example, female politicians often focus on women-related issues early in their careers, possibly due to career advancement incentives. As their professional goals evolve, their areas of focus may also change. It remains unclear whether growth in descriptive representation results in greater substantive representation, especially when the descriptive representation of political groups other than women is affected simultaneously.

## 2.2 Effects of Gender Quotas on Other Identity Dimensions

Gender quotas may also impact the representation of other politically significant traits, in addition to gender representation. Some existing studies find that political gender quotas may decrease minority representation (Karekurve-Ramachandra and Lee, 2020; Holmsten et al., 2010; Cassan and Vandewalle, 2021; Celis et al., 2014). Those effects can arise from the strategic responses of politicians or from the choices made by voters. Research on intersectionality highlights that women are not a homogeneous group, and quota reforms may disproportionately benefit candidates with closer ties to dominant social groups. As a result, increases in women's representation may coincide with declines in the representation of other communities. These distributional shifts show that quotas

can reallocate political power beyond the gender and can also reshape the representation of other social groups, potentially reinforcing pre-existing inequalities.

For example, Karekurve-Ramachandra and Lee (2020) examine the elections in India and find that women from upper castes are more likely to win reserved seats. Hence, the quotas also contribute to an imbalance in the representation of different castes. This result is mainly driven by the socioeconomic status of women in the group and the attitudes of individuals within the same group towards women. Folke et al. (2021) document another form of identity-based representation change resulting from the introduction of gender quotas in Sweden and Ireland. They find that women with dynastic ties are more likely to be elected in the initial election following quota implementation, particularly in districts with fewer female representatives. However, this effect is short-lived. After several elections, voters no longer rely on dynastic cues because they develop clearer expectations about viable female candidates. The authors attribute this pattern to screening discrimination, which historically made it more difficult for women than for men to receive accurate evaluations. In the early stages of quota implementation, family ties serve as an informational cue that helps voters overcome this uncertainty.

Although Folke et al. (2021)'s research mainly focuses on Ireland and Sweden, they also identify similar declining patterns of dynastic bias across many other democracies. However, it remains unclear how contextual differences, such as party-centered versus candidate-centered electoral systems, mediate the relationship between gender and dynastic recruitment. Previous studies argue that candidate-centered systems are more likely to produce dynastic politicians (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Smith, 2018), yet the gender composition of political dynasties remains understudied. This gap motivates a closer examination of how dynastic politics intersect with gender under different institutional

settings.

## 2.3 Dynasties and Gender Politics

To situate the analysis of dynasties and gender, it is necessary to review how political dynasties have been evaluated in the broader literature. Political dynasties are often viewed as normatively problematic because the inheritance of political power runs counter to democratic principles of political equality and open competition (Putnam, 1976). Dynastic politics reflects a self-perpetuating process among political elites, which may undermine democratic accountability when political office is effectively transferred within families.

Beyond these normative concerns, scholars argue that dynastic politicians tend to be less educated, a pattern that can lead to a range of negative consequences, including inferior public policies, weaker political effort, and greater reliance on clientelistic strategies for electoral survival (Geys, 2017; Geys and Smith, 2017; Bragança et al., 2015; Rossi, 2017; Cruz et al., 2017; Chandra, 2016). These concerns are echoed in public opinion. Survey evidence from Taiwan indicates that citizens generally hold negative perceptions of political dynasties (Huang, 2024). When voters elect incompetent politicians, the consequences may persist over extended periods as political power is inherited by family members, further exacerbating concerns about democratic quality.

While political dynasties are often viewed as normatively problematic, family connections have also played an important role in facilitating women's entry into politics. For example, we can observe numerous "widow's succession" cases in the United States during the early twentieth century, in which women entered politics by inheriting their husbands' positions upon their deaths (Dal Bó et al., 2009). This pattern is also observed in authoritarian regime. Clark and Clark (2000) note that during the authoritarian-era

Taiwan, running for office as a family member of a political victim became an important pathway for women to enter politics. Women emerged in public life as widows, daughters, or other relatives of persecuted activists, taking on temporary leadership roles within social movements and helping to sustain the momentum of political opposition (Waylen, 1996). As a result, their entry into politics was often driven by necessity rather than personal ambition, and their political agendas tended to be relatively passive. Given that women's political participation historically occurred primarily through family networks and under conditions of limited political opportunity, it is not surprising that dynastic women are sometimes viewed as "placeholders". The de facto power of these women is often constrained by familial expectations (Labonne et al., 2019; Jalalzai, 2013).

When gender quotas are introduced in such contexts, male politicians may recruit their female relatives to run for office in order to satisfy quota requirements while retaining political power within the family. These women may serve as "proxy candidates" and are expected to prioritize family interests over independent political agendas. For example, several studies shows that in India, male relatives of women politicians frequently usurp political roles that quota systems were designed to reserve for women (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; John, 2007; Huidobro et al., 2025).

Although the placeholder role of female politicians is often assumed, research on dynastic women remains limited, and it remains unclear whether women who enter politics with the support of a family name merely advance their families' political goals. Put differently, we do not know whether dynastic women who benefit from family reputation and institutional conditions continue the policy agendas of their predecessors or instead develop independent political priorities. Moreover, as a group whose pathways into politics differ from those of their peers, dynastic women may exhibit distinct issue preferences

in their legislative behavior. Accordingly, how women respond when confronted with gender quota requirements remains a question worthy of careful examination. In particular, it remains an open question how dynastic and non-dynastic women, as well as women legislators as a whole, respond to the presence or absence of gender quotas (Smith, 2018). This study aims to address these questions.

# 3 Gender Quotas and Political Dynasties in Taiwan

## 3.1 The History of Gender Quotas In Taiwan

In most countries that introduced gender quota laws, women's representation was limited prior to reform (Clayton, 2021). Taiwan represents a slightly different case from this broader pattern. Although gender quotas existed at the local level as early as 1947, these rules were not sufficiently effective in facilitating substantial increases in women's political participation.[3] In 1998, 53% of districts had no reserved seats, and 46% had only one reserved seat. Only 16% of candidates and 18% of elected councilors were women. Dissatisfaction with these outcomes—especially among feminist activists—motivated calls for reform.

To understand why earlier quotas had limited impact, it is important to situate them within Taiwan's broader gender structure. Taiwan during the authoritarian and early post-authoritarian era remained strongly patriarchal. Clark and Clark (2000) document that many patriarchal norms persisted, including heavy domestic burdens on women and the enduring expectation that they serve as "virtuous wives and good mothers." Despite advances in education and labor-force participation, women continued to face significant

[3] Districts with 5 to 14 seats have one reserved seat, and districts with 15 to 24 seats have two reserved seats.

gendered constraints in family responsibilities and workplace hierarchy.

Within this context, the Kuomintang (KMT) created specific organizational roles for women—most notably in the Women's League, the military system, and veterans' communities—that aligned with traditional expectations of women as caretakers and community stabilizers. Although these positions were rooted in conventional gender norms, they provided one of the few legitimate pathways for women to move from the domestic sphere into the public realm. Through such work, women were able to build organizational experience, develop extensive local networks, and accumulate political resources that later facilitated their entry into electoral politics (Chiang, 2009).

Prior to the quota reform, gender was not a salient political cleavage in Taiwan. Women were generally understood as members of other social categories rather than as a distinct political constituency with shared interests. The introduction of the quota, by increasing the visibility and numerical presence of women in councils, gradually elevated gender into a more meaningful axis of political representation.

In 1998, the national parliament began drafting a new set of local government laws. The revision of the gender quota rule became one of the key issues. The proposal was initially championed by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). With the support of women's organizations, the Legislative Yuan enacted a new quota system for local councils, which was first implemented in the 2002 elections (Hu, 2004; Yang, 2000; Huang, 2016). The electoral system for local councilors is a Single Non-Transferable Vote with Multiple Member Districts (SNTV-MMD), meaning that constituencies often have more than one seat. The new 1/4 quota rule requires that in any constituency with four or more seats, at least one must be reserved for women. A district with eight seats has two reserved seats, and one with twelve seats has three. If the top four vote-getters are all men, the

fourth man is replaced by the highest-ranked woman. Table 1 reports the distribution of total seats and reserved seats across constituencies. More than half of the constituencies reserve at least one seat for women, and approximately 20 percent reserve more than one.

Table 1: Number of Seats For Constituencies in Local Elections (2002-2022)

| # of Seats | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| # of Reserved Seats | | 0 | | | 1 | | | | 2 | | | | 3 | |
| (Proportion) | | (0.47) | | | (0.32) | | | | (0.17) | | | | (0.03) | |
| Count | 333 | 129 | 125 | 125 | 111 | 87 | 79 | 71 | 62 | 51 | 28 | 17 | 15 | 1 |

## 3.2 Political Dynasties in Taiwan

With the new quota law for local elections, more women are expected to enter politics. However, it is also noteworthy that dynastic politicians, who play a significant role in local politics, have also seen growth during the same period. According to the data, the percentage of dynastic councilors has grown from about 10% to 35% in the past two decades. The current percentage is much higher than 20 years ago (see Figure 1), which shows an opposite trend than several recent studies on political dynasties (Dal Bó et al., 2009; Gertzog, 1995; Folke et al., 2021).

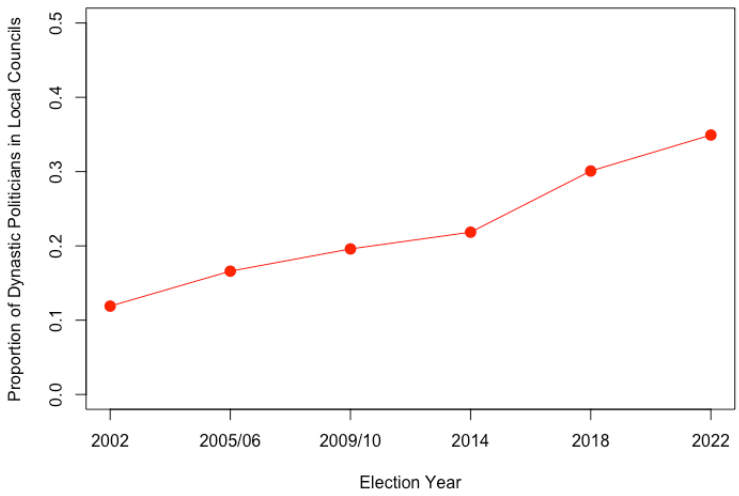


Figure 1: Proportion of Dynastic Politicians in Local Councils (2002 - 2022)

The prominence of political dynasties in local councils may be related to the electoral system. As mentioned earlier, the SNTV-MMD system implies that there are multiple seats in a constituency. In most districts, parties often nominate more than one candidate. Given that the election outcome is determined by individual votes, it implies that candidates need to compete with candidates from other parties and within the same party.

According to Shugart (2001), this electoral system has several features. Intra-party battles are more prominent than inter-party competition. It is particularly challenging for candidates to receive support from the party when resources are limited, and the party has multiple candidates in the constituency. Second, issues and ideologies play a minimal role in the election because voters find it challenging to identify candidates' positions solely based on the party label. In addition, candidates have a strong incentive to build personal connections with voters through constituency service and pork barrel projects. In short, SNTV-MMD is a highly candidate-centered system, and this type of system is usually correlated with particularistic strategies (Farrell et al., 1996; Norris, 2004; Muraoka, 2018). Hence, candidates who have name recognition, such as dynastic

politicians, can have a huge advantage. Parties are more inclined to recruit dynastic candidates because of their capacity to amass personal votes (Smith, 2018).

Table 2 presents the gender distribution of dynastic and non-dynastic politicians in local council elections. First, there were slightly more female candidates than male candidates from political families for every local council election after 2002. The distribution is entirely different with non dynastic candidates. There are many more men than women among non-dynastic candidates. This indicates that men are generally more active in politics, but women with family ties have slightly higher chances of entering politics than their male counterparts. Secondly, there are still more men than women among elected representatives due to the significant disparity between the number of male and female candidates. However, women have a slightly higher chance of winning. For non-dynastic candidates, the probability is 48% for men and 51% for women. The number of dynastic politicians is even higher, with 70% of male dynastic candidates and 72% of female dynastic candidates securing seats, which implies that dynastic politicians are the ones with the advantage. Last but not least, a higher proportion of female politicians (39%) than male (15%) politicians come from dynasties. Similar results can been found in other countries (Dal Bó et al., 2009; Basu, 2016; Smith and Martin, 2017; Nishizaki, 2018).

Table 2: Gender Representation of Candidates and Councilors (2002-2022)

| | Men | Women |
|---|---|---|
| Dynastic Candidates | 820 | 886 |
| (Councilors) | (571) | (642) |
| Non Dynastic Candidates | 6777 | 1969 |
| (Councilors) | (3232) | (1012) |

### 3.3 Why Do Gender Quotas Increase Women and Dynasties?

According to previous literature, during Taiwan's authoritarian era there emerged a tradition known as "Chiashu Campaigns" (Clark and Clark, 2000), in which female relatives of political prisoners—wives, daughters, or other kin—stood for election in place of their imprisoned male family members. This practice reflected a broader form of family-based politics under authoritarian rule, whereby women entered electoral competition as representatives of politically persecuted families rather than as autonomous political actors.

After democratization, political imprisonment disappeared, but the logic of family-mediated political succession persisted and diversified. Family members may step in when male politicians are unable to run because of criminal incarceration, health conditions, or other personal reasons. In some cases, family politics takes the form of joint or overlapping political careers, with spouses or parent–child pairs simultaneously or sequentially holding elected office. These patterns suggest that the mobilization of family members to sustain political representation has remained an enduring feature of Taiwanese politics, even as the institutional context has changed.

Importantly, entering politics through family substitution does not preclude the development of independent political agendas. Chiang (2009) shows that many women who initially entered politics unintentionally went on to cultivate their own policy priorities over time. As I will show in a later section, some female dynastic politicians in Taiwan diverge from their male predecessors by shifting their policy focus, indicating that the placeholder role does not universally apply, particularly in the democratic era.

In addition to political family, parties also have strategic motivations for selecting dynastic women as candidates. Consider a situation in which parties compete in a constituency with four seats, where institutional rules guarantee that at least one of the four

winners must be a woman. Parties choose both the number and gender composition of their nominees to maximize expected seat shares. Crucially, the quota operates as a minimum guarantee rather than a cap: female candidates may win more than one seat if their vote shares place them among the top four.

In this environment, nominating at least one woman constitutes a weakly dominant strategy for the following reasons. If a party nominates only men and the quota binds, the guaranteed female seat is awarded to the highest-vote female candidate from a rival party, mechanically reducing the party's expected seat share. By contrast, nominating a female candidate preserves the party's ability to compete for quota-induced seats without reducing its chances of winning non-reserved seats. However, strategic logic does not imply that parties benefit from nominating arbitrarily weak female candidates. Because rival parties face the same incentives, quota-induced competition typically takes the form of cross-party competition among female candidates. When each party nominates a woman, the quota no longer guarantees election to any particular party; instead, the seat is allocated to the woman with the highest vote total across all parties.

The required viability of a party's sole female nominee depends on strategic competition with rival parties (Batto, 2019). A female candidate who is substantially weaker than the party's marginal male contender may still be sufficient as a symbolic or insurance nomination. However, this strategy is unstable at equilibrium. If the quota binds, a weak female nominee is likely to lose to a stronger female nominee from the rival party. If the quota does not bind, she is unlikely to place among the top four candidates on her own merits and may further dilute intra-party votes. Anticipating these responses, parties are incentivized to nominate a woman whose electoral viability approaches that of the party's marginally winnable candidate. In equilibrium, nominating exactly one

woman is optimal only if her electoral viability is high enough to outperform rival parties' female nominees when the quota binds and is not substantially weaker than the party's marginally winnable male candidate when the quota does not bind.

This logic also clarifies when parties may optimally nominate more than one female candidate. A second female nomination is seat-maximizing only if the additional female candidate is strong enough to enter the top four independently, offsetting the vote-splitting costs induced by an expanded party slate. Otherwise, parties rationally limit female nominations to one, not because the quota constrains female success, but because strategic competition raises the viability threshold required for additional nominees to be elected. Taken together, the model implies that gender quotas can simultaneously increase women's representation and raise the average electoral strength of nominated female candidates through strategic selection, rather than mechanical substitution.

In this context, women from political dynasties emerge as prime targets for parties seeking electorally strong female candidates. First, dynastic politicians tend to be electorally competitive in Taiwan due to the resources they inherit, including political networks, campaign experience, and family reputation (Batto and Read, 2024). Second, female dynastic candidates help parties satisfy gender quota requirements by occupying seats reserved for women. Prior research provides sporadic evidence, based on interviews with political families, suggesting that nominating women within these families is a strategic response to gender quota requirements (Batto and Read, 2024). Consistent with the descriptive patterns discussed above, women candidates are limited in supply overall, with non-dynastic women being particularly scarce relative to non-dynastic men. This imbalance implies that when families nominate female relatives, these candidates face fewer same-gender competitors, thereby further enhancing their strategic appeal to parties. In

short, Gender quotas introduce an additional binding constraint by requiring parties to manage gender composition alongside electoral viability. Prior to the implementation of gender quotas, reliance on female dynastic candidates was optional rather than necessary. The introduction of quotas fundamentally altered this strategic calculus.

The introduction of the gender quota law also raises the cost of candidate recruitment, as parties are often compelled to identify new, viable female candidates. This burden is particularly pronounced for smaller parties, which tend to have more limited candidate pools and fewer resources for recruitment (Weeks, 2018). Although the law applies to all parties, those with fewer established female candidates must invest more in identifying new entrants. However, increased recruitment efforts may result in nominating candidates with limited name recognition, which can negatively affect electoral performance. For example, party officials in France anticipated electoral losses due to nominating unknown female candidates following the adoption of gender quotas (Murray, 2007).

Given that dynastic candidates are typically more electorally competitive within each gender due to inherited resources, name recognition, and established organizational bases, parties are especially inclined to nominate dynastic women once quotas apply. At the same time, quotas reduce the number of seats effectively available to male candidates. This crowding intensifies competition for the remaining male seat, leading parties to allocate it to the safest and most viable option—often a dynastic man. Taken together, quotas activate the nomination of dynastic women while reinforcing the selection of dynastic men through crowding. The combined effect is a systematic increase in the overall dynastic share of party nominations. Importantly, this mechanism does not imply that gender quotas enhance the intrinsic electoral strength of dynastic candidates. Rather, the rise in dynastic representation following quota adoption reflects strategic party adaptation to

new institutional constraints, not changes in the underlying appeal of dynastic candidates themselves. These lead to Hypothesis 1 and 2:

***H1: Constituencies with gender quotas have more women candidates and councilors than constituencies without gender quotas.***

***H2: Constituencies with gender quotas have more dynastic candidates and councilors than constituencies without gender quotas.***

A further question is whether politicians adjust their behavior in response to this type of gender quota. More specifically, do they shift their policy preferences when quotas are in place? Wang (2023) finds that women elected through national-level quotas in Taiwan devote greater attention to welfare, health, and education issues than women elected without quota support. This evidence suggests that, in the Taiwanese context, gender quotas may also generate changes in substantive representation. This expectation leads to the following hypothesis:

***H3: Constituencies with gender quotas exhibit higher levels of women's substantive representation than constituencies without gender quotas.***

Although existing research shows that gender quotas can alter policy outcomes, it remains unclear whether gender continues to matter when women's identities intersect with other social categories, such as dynastic status. Prior studies on political dynasties suggest that dynastic politicians have strong incentives to preserve the family brand and

maintain continuity in policy positions (Smith, 2018). When senior family members are male, female dynastic successors may therefore be constrained in their ability or willingness to shift policy priorities, particularly on women-related issues. As a result, dynastic women may resemble their male predecessors more closely than non-dynastic women do, exhibiting less divergence in policy focus despite their gender identity. This logic leads to the following hypothesis:

***H4: When the senior family member is male, dynastic women engage less with women-related issues than non-dynastic women.***

# 4 Empirical Design and Data

The identification strategy exploits a discontinuity generated by Taiwan's gender quota rule for local council elections. Under the current electoral law, only constituencies electing more than four councilors are subject to gender quotas, which require the reservation of at least one seat for a woman. The number of council seats allocated to each constituency is determined by the following statutory formula:

$$\#\text{ of Total Seats in the local council} \times \frac{\text{Constituency Population}}{\text{Municipality Population}}$$

The resulting value is then rounded according to a mechanical rule. A constituency with a calculated seat value exceeding 3.5 is assigned four seats, which triggers the reservation of one seat for a woman. Similarly, constituencies with values exceeding 7.5 are assigned eight seats, with two woman-reserved seats, and so on. As a result, treatment status changes discontinuously at known cut points of the forcing variable.

This institutional feature gives rise to a regression discontinuity design (RDD). I compare constituencies located just below and just above the first relevant cutoff, where the predicted number of seats crosses 3.5. The unit of analysis is the constituency. The running (forcing) variable is the predicted number of seats implied by the statutory formula, and the treatment is the application of the gender quota, defined as the presence of at least one woman-reserved seat. Because nearly all constituencies with more than four seats are automatically subject to the quota, treatment assignment at the cutoff is effectively deterministic.[4]

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Treat_{it} + \beta_2 Pred_{it} + \beta_3 Treat_{it} \times Pred_{it} + \theta_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$$

$Treat_{it}$ is the dummy variable indicating whether the constituency applies quotas, while $Pred_{it}$ is the distance from the formula cutoff, $\theta_{it}$ represents a set of covariates (voter turnout and number of parties in the constituency). I also include the constituency fixed effects and year fixed effects. Following a standard procedure, observations are weighted using the triangular kernel, and only observations within the bandwidth are included in the estimation (Calonico et al., 2014).

I retrieved the election data of candidates from the Central Election Commission website and information about dynastic politicians from Batto (2018)'s article. He collected data from three major newspapers (United Daily News, China Times, and Liberty Times) in Taiwan by utilizing the local sections of the newspapers for each municipality.[5] Because his dataset only covers elections from 2002 to 2014, I have employed the same approach to update the data to 2022. It is important to note that in coding whether a candidate belongs to a dynasty, I include cases in which the candidate's relatives have been elected

[4] Approximately 1% of constituencies (14 observations) do not comply with the assignment rule due to idiosyncratic rounding adjustments. These cases are excluded from the analysis.

[5] This method may be the most effective way to gather information on family ties, but it is still likely to under report the overall percentage of family ties.

to public office at any level of government.[6]

# 5 Results

Figure 2 and 3 visualizes the impact of gender quotas on several outcomes: (1) the gender ratio of all candidates, (2) the gender ratio of elected candidates, (3) the ratio of dynastic to non dynastic candidates, and (4) the ratio of dynastic to non dynastic elected candidates. Table 3 presents the estimated effects of gender quotas on various descriptive representation outcomes. In constituencies with gender quotas, the gender ratio of candidates increases by 13.1 percentage points, representing a 52% increase relative to the control group mean of 25%. Similarly, the proportion of dynastic candidates increases by 12 percentage points, an 86% rise from the baseline of 14%. This increase reflects a change in the composition of candidates rather than a mechanical implication of the quota rule, suggesting that quotas reshape party nomination strategies.

Beyond candidacy, the results also reveal positive and statistically significant effects on electoral success. These effects closely track the changes observed at the candidacy stage, indicating that quotas influence both who runs and who wins, rather than operating solely through reserved seats. Further analysis indicates that the proportion of female dynastic candidates and elected candidates also increases in constituencies with gender quotas. The share of dynastic candidates who are women is significantly higher in treated constituencies, both among those who run for seats and those who are elected. This pattern is not mechanically implied by gender quotas and points to a strategic reliance on female candidates from political families when parties face binding nomination constraints. These findings suggest that gender quotas not only encourage greater participation from

[6] Positions include village heads; township, county, and city councilors; executives at each level of local government; and the president.

women and dynastic candidates but also improve their likelihood of electoral success.[7]

Notably, this finding stands in contrast to evidence from Japan. Smith (2018) shows that, at the national level, institutions that facilitate dynastic representation are associated with weaker women's representation. The case of Taiwan's local elections, however, suggests that a candidate-centered system does not necessarily hinder women's representation. With the implementation of gender quotas, it is possible to accommodate the interests of both dynasties and parties while simultaneously enhancing women's representation. The major difference between Japan and Taiwan is the existence of gender quotas, which motivate dynasties and parties to nominate female dynasties.

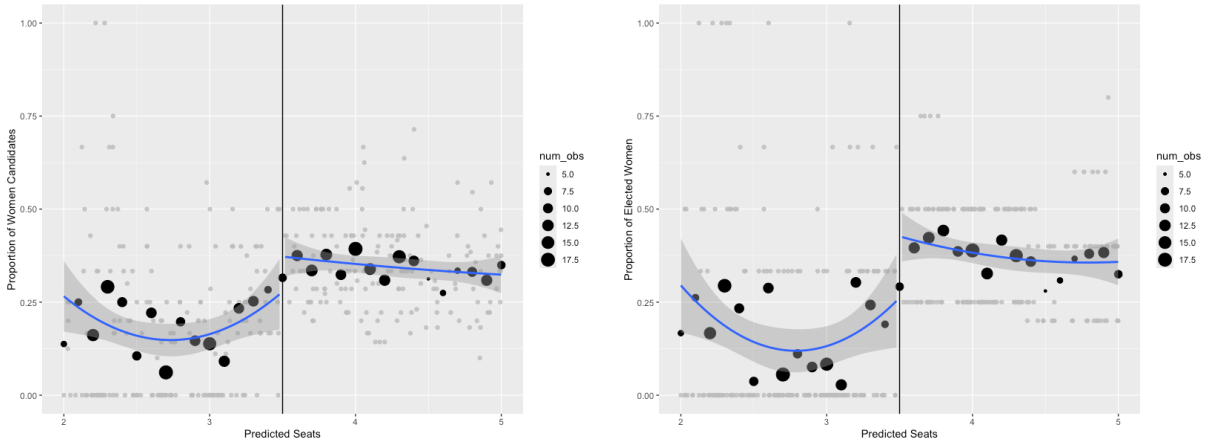


Figure 2: Effect of Gender Quotas on Female Candidates and Councilors

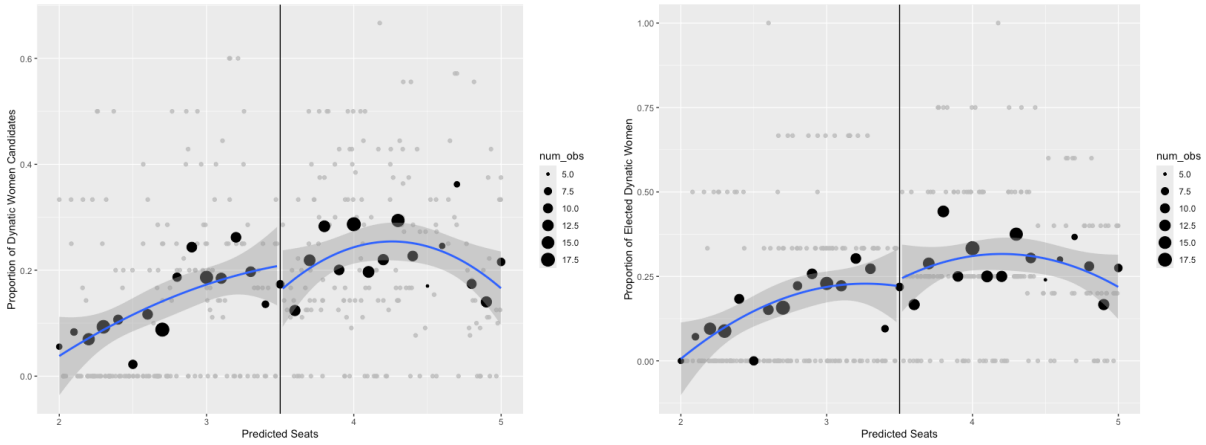


Figure 3: Effect of Quotas on Female Dynastic Candidates and Councilors

[7] Table A1 in the Appendix presents the descriptive statistics of the original dataset.

Table 3: RD Effects of Gender Quotas on Descriptive Representation

| | Women / All Candidates | Elected Women/ All Elected | Dyn/ All Candidates | Elected Dyn/ All Elected |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| RD Effect | 0.131* | 0.229*** | 0.120** | 0.152** |
| | (0.068) | (0.049) | (0.048) | (0.074) |
| Control Mean | 0.25 | 0.27 | 0.14 | 0.18 |
| Observations | 146 | 146 | 168 | 169 |
| Bandwidth | 0.60 | 0.60 | 0.71 | 0.72 |
| | Dyn Women/ All Candidates | Elected Dyn Women/ All Elected | Dyn Women/ All Dyn | Elected Dyn Women/ All Elected Dyn |
| RD Effect | 0.073*** | 0.135*** | 0.373*** | 0.294* |
| | (0.027) | (0.049) | (0.117) | (0.153) |
| Control Mean | 0.067 | 0.084 | 0.283 | 0.253 |
| Observations | 200 | 234 | 263 | 308 |
| Bandwidth | 0.83 | 0.97 | 1.14 | 1.34 |
| Bandwidth rule | optimal | optimal | optimal | optimal |
| Covariates | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Polynomial | linear | linear | linear | linear |

$^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Dyn refers to dynastic candidates, Elected Dyn refers to elected dynastic candidates, Female Dyn refers to female dynastic candidates, and Elected Female Dyn refers to elected female dynastic candidates. Standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust and clustered by constituency, reported in parentheses. All regressions include constituency and year fixed effects. Covariates include voter turnout and the number of parties. Observations are weighted using the triangular kernel.

To confirm the robustness of the main findings, I conducted a series of tests. First, the McCrary test is employed to demonstrate that there was no manipulation around the cutoff. The results of this test are presented in the Appendix (Figure A1). Secondly, a placebo test was conducted to verify the results in Table 3 by using an alternative cutoff. In accordance with the gender quota rule, constituencies with five and six seats are allocated the same number of reserved seats (one seat). Thus, the objective was to ascertain whether there is a notable ratio increase for female dynastic candidates in six-seat constituencies relative to five-seat constituencies. Table A2 in the appendix indicates that the available evidence does not substantiate the assertion that the increased availability of seats is a primary driver of the observed rise in female dynastic candidates. Consequently, it can be inferred that the reserved seats for women, rather than the additional available

seats, are a key factor in the increase in female candidates and female dynastic candidates. Third, I also show that the results remain consistent with different bandwidths (see Table A3 and A4 in the Appendix).

As discussed earlier, I argue that Taiwan's gender quota rules incentivize parties to nominate women, as this represents the most strategic response under the institutional constraints. If one party fails to nominate a woman, it effectively cedes the reserved seat to its opponent. However, not just any female candidate can secure the seat. She must be electorally competitive. In the Taiwanese context, such competitiveness is often associated with dynastic background (Batto, 2018). Therefore, we should expect to observe higher rates of female and dynastic nominations, particularly dynastic women, in constituencies subject to gender quotas.

To test this claim, I examine the nomination strategies of the two major parties, the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The results, presented in Figure 4, support this argument: in districts with gender quotas, both parties nominate a higher share of women among all party nominees, a higher share of dynastic candidates among all party nominees, and a higher share of dynastic women among female nominees. Notably, these patterns are more pronounced for the DPP. While the KMT also shows positive coefficients for the share of women and the share of dynastic candidates among its nominees, these effects are not statistically significant. By contrast, when focusing on the nomination of dynastic women among female candidates, the effect is positive for both parties and statistically significant for the KMT, indicating a greater reliance on dynastic women when nominating female candidates in quota districts.[8]

[8] See Table A5 in the appendix for the complete table.

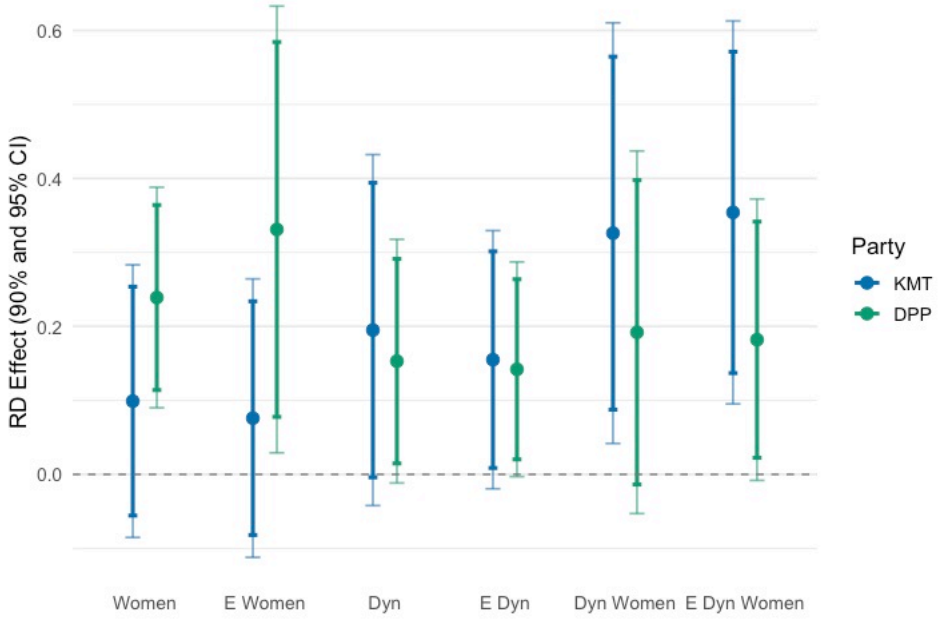


Figure 4: RD Effects of the Gender Quota on Parties' Nomination Strategy

Figure 5 further illustrates the gap in vote share between female candidates from two major parties and other minor parties in constituencies with quotas. The coefficients for the aggregate major parties and one of the major parties (DPP) are positive and significant. Though the coefficient for the other major party (KMT) is insignificant, it is still positive. The vote share gap between the two major parties and minor parties is aligned with their behaviors during the legislation of the gender quota. In comparison to the KMT, the DPP has experienced a more pronounced advantage following the implementation of a gender quota. This pattern is consistent with the DPP's earlier and stronger commitment to quota adoption, which may have allowed it to better internalize and strategically adapt to the new nomination rules.

Generally speaking, it is more difficult for small parties to find competitive female candidates, so they either do not nominate or recruit candidates with low name recognition. As a result, quotas impose asymmetric constraints across parties, disproportionately binding smaller parties with thinner candidate pools. This results in a situation where

the stronger parties become even stronger, while the weaker ones become even weaker.[9]

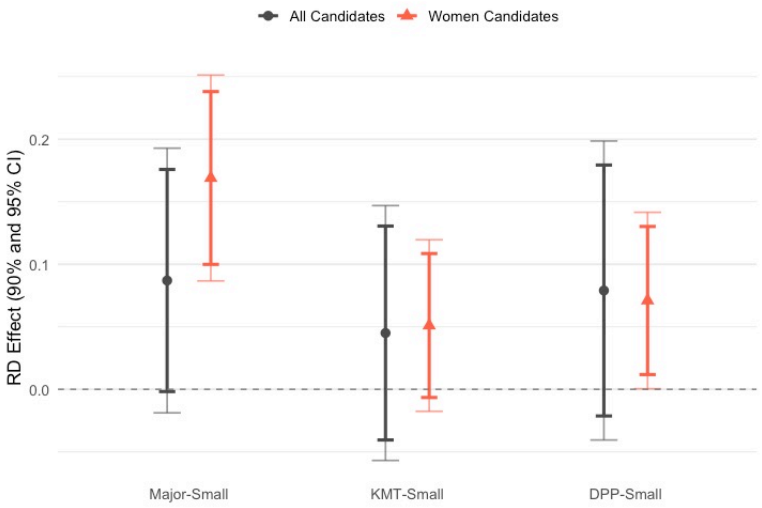


Figure 5: RD Effects of the Gender Quota on Parties' Vote Share

While the previous analyses show that the gender quota creates incentives for major parties to nominate women, particularly competitive dynastic women, these benefits depend critically on the availability of suitable candidates. Strategic responses operate within real-world supply constraints. Not all districts provide parties with an adequate pool of electorally viable women, and this constraint becomes more severe as the number of reserved seats increases. Table 4 illustrates this point. Both the KMT and the DPP exhibit substantially higher rates of "gender deficit" districts when more seats are reserved for women. These deficits reflect situations in which parties cannot find enough competitive female candidates to fully meet the quota requirement.

In this sense, the quota system creates both strategic advantages and practical challenges. When strong female candidates are available, parties gain from nominating them. When they are not available, parties face quota obligations that are difficult to satisfy. This duality helps explain why media reports occasionally note that major parties forgo

[9] See Table A6 in the appendix for the complete table.

contesting certain women-reserved seats because they lack "suitable" candidates (Young, 1998). It also suggests that, in practice, candidate quality often outweighs strict numerical compliance. Parties tend to nominate fewer but more competitive women to protect their electoral position, especially in districts with a larger number of reserved seats.

Table 4: Gender Deficit Districts of Major Parties

| | 1 reserved seat | 2 reserved seats | 3 reserved seats |
|---|---|---|---|
| KMT | 18.4% | 40.6% | 54.5% |
| DPP | 35.0% | 74% | 91.0% |

Notes: % means the percentage of gender deficit districts among all districts in the category. A deficit district indicates that the party nominates fewer female candidates than the number of women-reserved seats that the constituency has.

# 6 Substantive Representation of Women

Given that the gender quota leads to an increase in certain types of politicians, what are the potential policy implications? As demonstrated in previous sections, the implementation of gender quotas led to an increase not only in women's representation but also in the presence of dynastic politicians. Most of the existing literature suggests that dynasties are generally viewed as less attentive to women's interests, even when the dynastic politicians themselves are women (Jalalzai, 2008; Choi, 2019; Thompson, 2022; Ascencio and Malik, 2024). Schwindt-Bayer (2010) also points out that elite women have different life experiences from those of ordinary women. This divergence may shape distinct policy preferences and limit the extent to which they represent broader women's interests.

To assess whether gender quotas still result in policy changes beyond shifts in descriptive representation, I examine the legislative behavior of councilors in local councils. To be more specific, I look at the frequency and context of sponsored bills and speeches that

covered women-related issues from 2002 to 2023.[10]

The next question is how to construct the keywords for women-related issues. To build a comprehensive list of women's issues, I draw on several previous studies (Meguid et al., 2025; Burrell, 1996; Gerrity et al., 2007; Lawless, 2015). Generally, issues such as gender equity, child care, employee flex time, and abortion are typically included. The most appropriate approach is to rely on prior studies conducted in the same country. However, because most official surveys in Taiwan provide only broad categories of women's issues without specifying particular keywords, I ultimately draw on the keywords they employ, while making minor modifications to suit the Taiwanese context.[11]

I utilize the official database of local council minutes as the primary source of information.[12] For cities and counties not included in the database, I supplement with keyword searches on the respective local council websites. And then, I filter the council minutes by searching for relevant Chinese keywords. These keywords are selected to capture speeches or bills related to the topics of interest. I then manually review the context of the filtered paragraphs. Table 5 provides two examples. If a bill is co-sponsored by multiple councilors, every co-sponsor is counted separately. Therefore, for this type of bill, the unit of analysis is the individual councilor. [13]

[10] In the context of local councils in Taiwan, the main difference between bills and speeches lies in the requirement that the former must be seconded by multiple councilors, whereas the latter does not. It is common to see councilors mention the same issues in both their proposals and speeches, and the local governments need to respond if there are some requests or questions in bills or speeches. Moreover, the number of required seconders for a bill is usually low (1–2 councilors). Therefore, in this paper, I treat both as forms of legislative behavior in a broad sense.

[11] For the complete list of keywords and the corresponding descriptive statistics, see Tables A6 and A7 in the appendix.

[12] https://journal.th.gov.tw/

[13] Figure A2 shows the frequency trend of women-related bills and speeches. We can see the related bills and speeches increase over time.

Table 5: Examples of Bills and Speeches

| Councilors | Content | Type | Keyword1 | Keyword2 | Year | County/City |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tai Ning | For the safety of the learning environment for young children, it is recommended that the Chiayi City Government actively address the "Seismic Reinforcement Project of Chiayi City Wu Feng Kindergarten." | Bills | children | kindergarten | 2018 | Chiayi City |
| Huang Tian-Tsai | ···Looking back over the past six or seven years, especially in the last two or three years, unemployment among workers in the southern region has increased even more. Disadvantaged groups have also been growing in number, including a worsening situation among single-parent families due to divorce. | Speeches | single parent | divorce | 2007 | Kaohsiung City |

Furthermore, Figure 6 visualizes the most popular keywords included in bills and speeches, and the three most popular keywords are kindergarten, children, and women.[14] It is understandable that child-related issues, such as asking for new kindergartens, have become popular. On one hand, this is a concern shared by fathers and mothers, not just a women-specific issue. On the other hand, advocating for new public facilities is one of the easiest achievements for local councilors to claim credit for. Compared to discussing abstract law or policy changes, new public infrastructure is more visible and tangible to voters. This finding also aligns with previous research, suggesting that gender quotas are more likely to influence policies that transcend party lines or ideological divisions. These issues tend to face less resistance from conservative groups, who are generally more hesitant to adopt progressive policies. (Barnes, 2016; Weeks, 2022; Wiliarty, 2010).

[14] Since this study focuses on local councils, laws or regulations about parental leave or women's employment protection fall outside the jurisdiction of local governments. As a result, local councilors are less likely to address these issues.


Figure 6: Text Cloud of Keywords Included in Bills and Speeches

I also conduct the same regression discontinuity design here and also find that districts with quotas have more women relevant bills or speeches (Table 6). This implies that gender quotas also increase the substantive representation.[15]

Table 6: Substantive Representation

| Bills & Speeches | Total Numbers (Aggregate) | Average Numbers (per Councilor) |
|---|---|---|
| RD Effects | 5.869** | 1.238* |
| | (2.609) | (0.727) |
| Control Mean | 3.75 | 0.63 |
| Observations | 327 | 321 |
| Bandwidth | 1.42 | 1.38 |

$^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. The dependent variables are the number of bills and speeches. Column 1 is the aggregated number of bills and speeches for all councilors in the constituencies, and Column 2 is the average number of bills and speeches per councilor. Standard errors are heteroskedasticity robust (cluster at constituency level) and presented in parentheses. All regressions include fixed effects for the constituency and year. Covariates are voter turnout and the number of parties. Observations are weighted by the triangular kernel.

Having established that quotas increase women-related bills and speeches, I next ex-

[15] Given the number of seats are different, districts with gender quotas have more councilors and thus may increase the number of bills and speeches. Here, I also present the average number of bills and speeches per person.

amine which types of councilors drive this pattern. This disaggregated analysis compares how different types of councilors, distinguished by gender and dynastic status, contribute to women-related legislation and clarifies whether quotas merely increase descriptive representation or whether specific subgroups translate them into substantive policy engagement. Figure indicates that both dynastic and non-dynastic women introduce more bills and speeches than their male counterparts, whereas the difference between dynastic and non-dynastic women is relatively modest. This suggests that gender, rather than dynastic status, is the key determinant of legislative attention to women's issues.

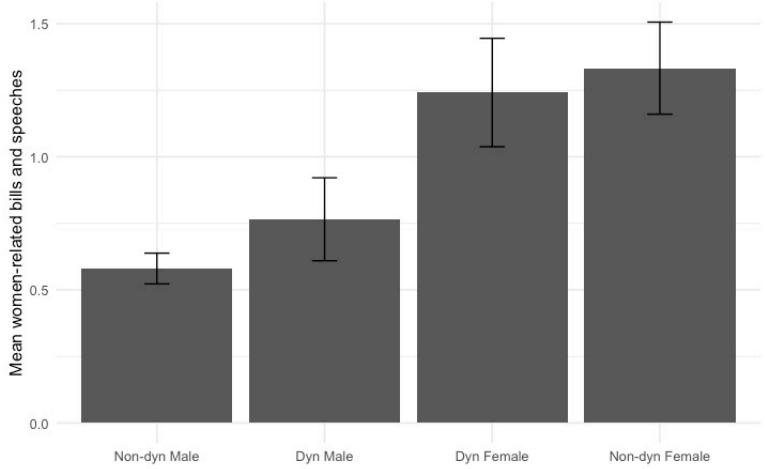


Figure 7: Text Cloud of Keywords Included in Bills and Speeches

Consistent with the descriptive patterns, the regression results (Table 7) show that female dynastic councilors introduce significantly more women-related bills and speeches than both non-dynastic men and dynastic men; Wald tests reject the null in both comparisons ($p < 0.001$ and $p < 0.01$, respectively). In contrast, the difference between female dynastic and non-dynastic female councilors is not statistically significant (p = 0.12). Taken together, these comparisons indicate that gender, rather than dynastic status, is the principal driver of substantive representation.

When comparing districts with and without gender quotas, a clear gender gap emerges

only in quota districts. In quota constituencies, the coefficient on women is positive and statistically significant, indicating that women councilors are more engaged with women-related issues than men. By contrast, in non-quota districts, the corresponding coefficient on women is statistically indistinguishable from zero, suggesting no systematic gender difference in engagement with women's issues in the absence of quota institutions. Instead, in districts without quotas, dynastic background plays a more prominent role. The coefficient on dynastic status is positive and statistically significant in non-quota districts, indicating that dynastic councilors, rather than women per se, are more likely to engage with women-related issues. Taken together, these patterns suggest that gender is a stronger and more consistent predictor of engagement with women's issues than quota exposure alone. This finding is consistent with earlier work emphasizing the role of descriptive representation in shaping substantive outcomes (Clayton et al., 2017).

Further analyses of intra-group differences provide insight into the mechanisms underlying these patterns by examining interaction terms and subgroup-specific specifications. Among men, the coefficient on quota exposure is positive and statistically significant, indicating a spillover effect whereby male councilors in quota districts become more engaged with women-related issues. However, this effect is heterogeneous across dynastic status. The interaction between dynastic background and quota exposure among men is negative and statistically significant, implying that dynastic men respond less strongly to quota environments than non-dynastic men. In non-quota districts, by contrast, dynastic men are significantly more active on women's issues, consistent with their inherited constituency service styles and stronger political resources.

Table 7: Bills and Speeches Count Among Difference Groups

| | All | w/Quota | w/o Quota | Men | Women |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Women | 0.671*** | 0.679*** | 0.411 | | |
| | (0.085) | (0.089) | (0.273) | | |
| w/Quota | | | | 1.042** | 1.261 |
| | | | | (0.437) | (1.064) |
| Dynastic | 0.037 | −0.065 | 0.635* | 0.618* | −0.911 |
| | (0.085) | (0.083) | (0.336) | (0.336) | (0.809) |
| Women*Dynastic | −0.246 | −0.169 | −0.393 | | |
| | (0.155) | (0.160) | (0.485) | | |
| w/Quota*Dynastic | | | | −0.744** | 0.778 |
| | | | | (0.343) | (0.820) |
| Observations | 5,453 | 4,487 | 966 | 3,799 | 1,654 |
| $R^2$ | 0.253 | 0.253 | 0.368 | 0.250 | 0.347 |

$^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. The dependent variable is the total count of women-related bills and speeches. Standard errors are heteroskedasticity robust (cluster at constituency level) and presented in parentheses. All regressions include fixed effects for the constituency and year.

By contrast, no comparable heterogeneity emerges among women councilors. The coefficient on dynastic status among women is not statistically significant, nor is the interaction between being female and having a dynastic background. Although the interaction term is consistently negative, its lack of statistical significance indicates that dynastic women do not systematically disengage from women-related policy activity relative to non-dynastic women.

Building on the preceding analyses showing that women, on average, are more attentive to women's issues than men, I further examine which types of female legislators are most likely to engage with these concerns. Table 8 indicates that younger and more highly educated women are significantly more active in introducing women-related bills and speeches. In contrast, female legislators who inherited their positions from male seniors tend to be less active on these issues, although the effect is not statistically significant.

Table 8: What Kind of Women Advance Women's Issues?

| | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Male Predecessor | −0.203 | −0.195 |
| | (0.139) | (0.133) |
| Age | −0.025** | −0.025** |
| | (0.011) | (0.011) |
| Major Party | −0.181 | −0.178 |
| | (0.178) | (0.174) |
| Education | 0.077** | 0.078** |
| | (0.036) | (0.035) |
| Quota District | 0.114 | −0.141 |
| | (0.093) | (0.197) |
| Number of Female Councilors | | 0.044 |
| | | (0.079) |
| Total Elected Seats | | 0.058 |
| | | (0.069) |
| Observations | 1,614 | 1,614 |
| $R^2$ | 0.261 | 0.262 |

$^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. The dependent variable is the total count of women-related bills and speeches. Male Predecessor indicates whether a female legislator inherited her seat from a male relative, such as a father or husband. Age measures the legislator's age at the time of election. Major party is coded as 1 if the candidate is affiliated with one of the two major parties (KMT or DPP), and 0 otherwise. Education captures the legislator's education level on years. Standard errors are clustered at the council level and shown in parentheses. All models include council and year fixed effects.

To further assess whether dynastic women merely replicate their predecessors' behavior, I conduct within-family comparisons. While prior research suggests that kin successors often maintain the family brand to preserve incumbency advantages and representational continuity (Smith, 2018), the observed patterns suggest a more heterogeneous reality. Figure 8 shows among female successors, 40 percent are more active than their dynasty

seniors, 42 percent show similar levels of activity, and only 18 percent are less active. These findings challenge the strong version of the "placeholder" hypothesis, which assumes that female successors passively continue the political agenda of their predecessors. It is important to note that this analysis is limited to cases in which the senior relative also served as a city councilor. Female legislators whose predecessors held other positions, such as township heads or members of parliament, are not included in this comparison.


Figure 8: Engaging Women's Issues: Dynastic Women vs. Their Predecessors

While institutional and familial constraints may shape women's legislative behavior, the evidence provides limited support for the view that dynastic women are merely passive transmitters of their family seniors' approaches. Regression results suggest that inheriting a seat from a male senior is not significantly associated with greater engagement on women-related issues. Moreover, within-family comparisons reveal substantial variation in behavior: many dynastic women appear to pursue their own legislative priorities, with a considerable share more active than their predecessors.

# 7 Conclusion

This paper demonstrates that gender quotas can generate a range of outcomes, some of which challenge conventional views. While gender quotas are often framed as tools to empower women and reshape the political agenda, the case of Taiwan reveals a more complex reality. Quotas enhanced the descriptive representation of women, but they have also facilitated the continued influence of dynasties in local politics. In particular, dynastic women have emerged as prominent beneficiaries, occupying the reserved spaces created for women while preserving existing familial networks of political power. In addition, major parties also solidify their advantage by nominating dynasties, crowding out the space of other small parties.

Another important finding is that the increase in women-related legislative activity following the introduction of gender quotas is primarily driven by female legislators themselves, especially those who are younger and more educated. While a substantial share of these women come from political families, inheriting a seat from a male relative does not significantly predict greater or lesser engagement with women's issues. In fact, female dynastic legislators display considerable variation in behavior: 40 percent are more active than their senior family members, while 18 percent are less active. These patterns suggest that rather than merely replicating family styles or serving as symbolic placeholders, many dynastic women develop their own legislative agendas, sometimes distinct from their predecessors, and contribute to a more diverse and independent form of substantive representation.

Returning to the question posed at the beginning of this study, whether gender quotas represent a win for women or for political dynasties, the evidence suggests that the answer is likely both, albeit in different ways. The introduction of quotas has led to a measurable

increase in the share of both female and dynastic councilors, confirming that dynasties have adapted to the institutional constraints by nominating women from within their families. However, inheriting a seat from a male relative does not appear to significantly increase women-related legislative activity, and dynastic women show substantial variation in their behavior. Some adopt priorities distinct from their predecessors, while others align more closely.

At the council level, districts subject to gender quotas exhibit higher volumes of bills and speeches addressing women's concerns, and these efforts are disproportionately led by female legislators. While dynasties continue to play a prominent role in local politics, their influence does not necessarily translate into uniform patterns of representation. Rather than signaling a full convergence of dynastic interest and gendered advocacy, these patterns suggest a more complex negotiation between familial legacy and institutional demands. How political families navigate this tension and whether female dynastic legislators can shift their family's representational style remains a key question for future research

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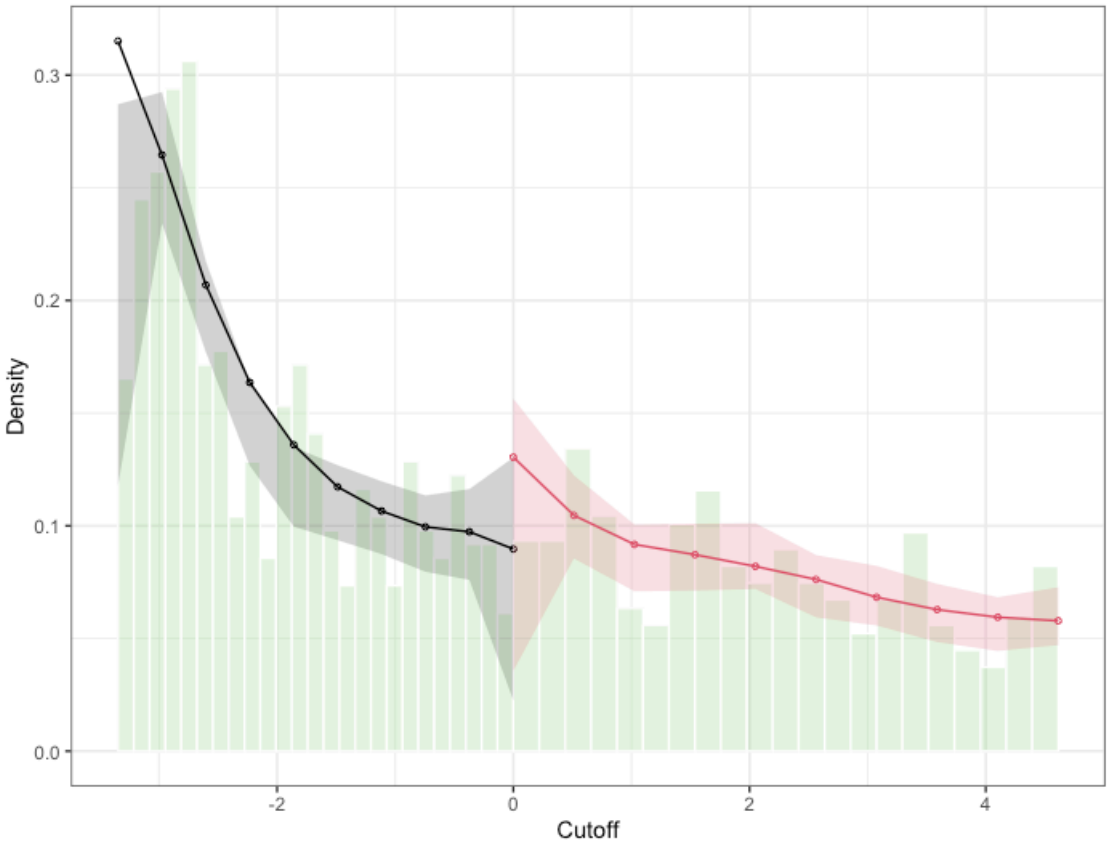
# Appendix

## Descriptive Statistics of the Original Dataset

Table A1: Summary Statistics

| | N | Mean | St. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| # of All Candidates | 1,220 | 8.470 | 6.438 | 1 | 34 |
| # of All Female Candidates | 1,220 | 2.304 | 2.117 | 0 | 10 |
| # of All Elected Candidates | 1,220 | 4.430 | 3.249 | 1 | 14 |
| # of All Elected Female Candidates | 1,220 | 1.343 | 1.322 | 0 | 7 |
| # of Dyn Female Candidates | 1,220 | 0.719 | 0.969 | 0 | 6 |
| # of Elected Dyn Female Candidates | 1,220 | 0.523 | 0.795 | 0 | 6 |
| Constituency w/ Quota | 1,220 | 0.525 | 0.500 | 0 | 1 |
| Distance From the Cutoff | 1,220 | 0.859 | 3.327 | −3.347 | 10.121 |
| Voter Turnout | 1,220 | 0.660 | 0.084 | 0.363 | 0.925 |
| # of Parties | 1,220 | 3.250 | 1.540 | 1 | 12 |

## Robustness Checks




The confidence intervals overlap and the p-value for the overlap size is 0.6381, which means no manipulation around the cutoff.

Figure A1: McCrary Density Test

Table A2: Placebo Test (Discontinuity Moved to 5.5)

| | Women / All Candidates | Elected Women/ All Elected | Dyn/ All Candidates | Elected Dyn/ All Elected |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| RD Effect | $-0.051^{**}$ | $-0.127^{***}$ | $-0.084$ | $-0.169^{**}$ |
| | (0.025) | (0.038) | (0.054) | (0.071) |
| Control Mean | 0.24 | 0.26 | 0.13 | 0.16 |
| Observations | 216 | 200 | 330 | 325 |
| Bandwidth | 1.13 | 1.05 | 1.63 | 1.58 |
| | Dyn Women/ All Candidates | Elected Dyn Women/ All Elected | Dyn Women/ All Dyn | Elected Dyn Women/ All Elected Dyn |
| RD Effect | $-0.023$ | $-0.037$ | $-0.024$ | $-0.069$ |
| | (0.040) | (0.062) | (0.220) | (0.223) |
| Control Mean | 0.067 | 0.089 | 0.268 | 0.248 |
| Observations | 263 | 242 | 303 | 247 |
| Bandwidth | 1.35 | 1.24 | 1.50 | 1.27 |
| Bandwidth rule | optimal | optimal | optimal | optimal |
| Covariates | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Polynomial | linear | linear | linear | linear |

$^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Dyn refers to dynastic candidates, Elected Dyn refers to elected dynastic candidates, Dyn Women refers to female dynastic candidates, and Elected Dyn Women refers to elected female dynastic candidates. Standard errors are cluster-robust at the constituency (district) level and reported in parentheses. All regressions include constituency and year fixed effects. Covariates include voter turnout and the number of parties. Observations are weighted using the triangular kernel.

Table A3: RD Effects for Main Results with Varying Bandwidths

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Women / All Candidates | | | |
| RD Effect | 0.131* | 0.159*** | 0.107* |
| | (0.068) | (0.053) | (0.063) |
| Observations | 146 | 276 | 433 |
| Bandwidth | 0.60 | 1.20 | 1.79 |
| Elected Women / All Elected | | | |
| RD Effect | 0.229*** | 0.269*** | 0.196*** |
| | (0.049) | (0.071) | (0.066) |
| Observations | 146 | 276 | 429 |
| Bandwidth | 0.60 | 1.19 | 1.79 |
| Bandwidth rule | optimal | manual | manual |
| Dyn / All Candidates | | | |
| RD Effect | 0.120** | 0.068 | 0.065 |
| | (0.048) | (0.043) | (0.045) |
| Observations | 168 | 327 | 516 |
| Bandwidth | 0.71 | 1.42 | 2.13 |
| Elected Dyn / All Elected | | | |
| RD Effect | 0.152** | 0.067 | 0.092 |
| | (0.074) | (0.065) | (0.069) |
| Observations | 169 | 329 | 522 |
| Bandwidth | 0.72 | 1.44 | 2.15 |
| Bandwidth rule | optimal | manual | manual |

$^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Women refers to female candidates and Elected Women refers to elected female candidates. Dyn refers to dynastic candidates and Elected Dyn refers to elected dynastic candidates. Standard errors are cluster-robust at the constituency level and reported in parentheses. All regressions include constituency and year fixed effects. Covariates include voter turnout and the number of parties. Observations are weighted using the triangular kernel.

Table A4: RD Effects for Main Results with Varying Bandwidths

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dyn Women / All Candidates | | | |
| RD Effect | 0.073*** | 0.047 | 0.041 |
| | (0.027) | (0.036) | (0.032) |
| Observations | 200 | 390 | 610 |
| Bandwidth | 0.83 | 1.66 | 2.49 |
| Elected Dyn Women / All Elected | | | |
| RD Effect | 0.135*** | 0.102* | 0.014 |
| | (0.049) | (0.053) | (0.078) |
| Observations | 234 | 474 | 769 |
| Bandwidth | 0.97 | 1.94 | 2.91 |
| Bandwidth rule | optimal | manual | manual |
| Dyn Women / All Dyn | | | |
| RD Effect | 0.373*** | 0.344*** | 0.237** |
| | (0.117) | (0.125) | (0.107) |
| Observations | 263 | 555 | 935 |
| Bandwidth | 1.14 | 2.29 | 3.43 |
| Bandwidth rule | optimal | manual | manual |
| Elected Dyn Women / All Elected Dyn | | | |
| RD Effect | 0.294* | 0.252* | 0.218 |
| | (0.153) | (0.131) | (0.152) |
| Observations | 308 | 667 | 977 |
| Bandwidth | 1.34 | 2.68 | 4.02 |
| Bandwidth rule | optimal | manual | manual |

$^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Dyn Women refers to female dynastic candidates, and Elected Dyn Women refers to elected female dynastic candidates. Standard errors are cluster-robust at the constituency level and reported in parentheses. All regressions include constituency and year fixed effects. Covariates include voter turnout and the number of parties. Observations are weighted using the triangular kernel.

# Supplementary Results

Table A5: RD Effects of the Gender Quota on Parties' Nomination Strategy

| | KMT Women/ KMT | DPP Women/ DPP | KMT E Women/ KMT Elected | DPP E Women/ DPP Elected |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| RD Effect | 0.099 | 0.239*** | 0.076 | 0.331** |
| | (0.094) | (0.076) | (0.096) | (0.154) |
| Control Mean | 0.276 | 0.200 | 0.264 | 0.193 |
| Observations | 164 | 232 | 184 | 223 |
| Bandwidth | 0.68 | 0.97 | 0.78 | 0.91 |
| | KMT Dyn/ KMT | DPP Dyn/ DPP | KMT E Dyn/ KMT Elected | DPP E Dyn/ DPP Elected |
| RD Effect | 0.195 | 0.153* | 0.155* | 0.142* |
| | (0.121) | (0.084) | (0.089) | (0.074) |
| Control Mean | 0.171 | 0.120 | 0.170 | 0.115 |
| Observations | 170 | 276 | 221 | 355 |
| Bandwidth | 0.73 | 1.21 | 0.90 | 1.57 |
| | KMT Dyn Women/ KMT Female | DPP Dyn Women/ DPP Female | KMT E Dyn Women/ KMT E Female | DPP E Dyn Women/ DPP E Female |
| RD Effect | 0.326** | 0.192 | 0.354*** | 0.182* |
| | (0.145) | (0.125) | (0.132) | (0.097) |
| Control Mean | 0.181 | 0.147 | 0.174 | 0.125 |
| Observations | 255 | 364 | 304 | 308 |
| Bandwidth | 1.11 | 1.59 | 1.33 | 1.35 |
| Bandwidth rule | optimal | optimal | optimal | optimal |
| Covariates | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Polynomial | linear | linear | linear | linear |

$^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Standard errors are heteroskedasticity robust and clustered at the constituency level. All regressions include constituency and year fixed effects. Covariates are voter turnout and the number of parties. Observations are weighted by the triangular kernel.

Table A6: Vote Share Difference Between Major and All Small Parties

| All Candidates | Major−All Small | KMT−All Small | DPP−All Small |
|---|---|---|---|
| RD Effect | 0.087 | 0.045 | 0.079 |
| | (0.054) | (0.052) | (0.061) |
| Control Mean | 0.56 | 0.38 | 0.13 |
| Observations | 276 | 255 | 235 |
| Bandwidth | 1.19 | 1.09 | 0.98 |
| Women | Major−All Small | KMT−All Small | DPP−All Small |
| RD Effect | 0.169*** | 0.051 | 0.071* |
| | (0.042) | (0.035) | (0.036) |
| Control Mean | 0.161 | 0.105 | 0.042 |
| Observations | 170 | 211 | 278 |
| Bandwidth | 0.73 | 0.85 | 1.20 |
| Bandwidth rule | optimal | optimal | optimal |
| Covariates | Y | Y | Y |
| Polynomial | linear | linear | linear |

$^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. The dependent variables are the vote share difference between the two major parties (KMT and DPP) and the aggregated vote share of all small parties. Standard errors are heteroskedasticity robust cluster at constituency level and presented in parentheses. All regressions include fixed effects for the constituency and year. The covariates are voter turnout and the number of parties. Observations are weighted by the triangular kernel.

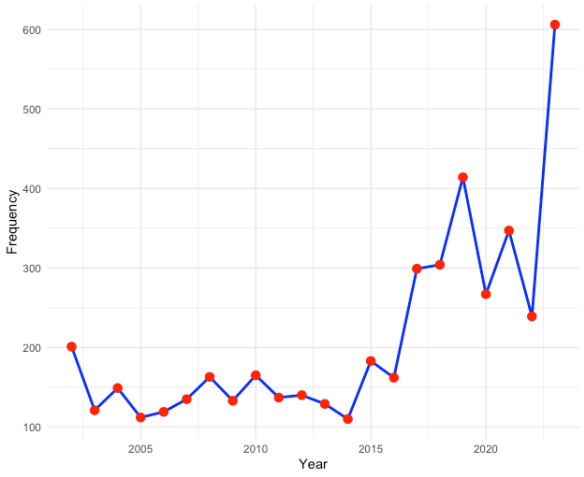



Figure A2: Yearly Trend of Women Related Issue Bills and Speeches

Table A7: Keyword and Chinese Translation

| Keyword | Chinese | Keyword | Chinese | Keyword | Chinese |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| abortion | 墮胎 | marriage | 婚姻/結婚 | rape | 強姦/性侵害 |
| at home with children | 在家顧孩子 | parental leave | 育嬰假 | respect women | 尊重女性 |
| baby | 嬰兒 | parenting | 育兒 | second shift | 第二輪班 |
| babysitting | 保母 | pater est | 婚生子女 | sex worker | 性工作者 |
| birth | 出生 | pornography | 色情/情色 | sexual harassment | 性騷擾 |
| birth benefit | 生育津貼 | postnatal | 產後 | single parent | 單親 |
| birth subsidy | 生育補助 | pregnant | 懷孕 | stalking | 跟蹤 |
| prenatal | 產前 | subsidy | 補助 | breast cancer | 乳癌 |
| preschool | 學前教育 | violence | 暴力 | breastfeeding | 哺乳 |
| prostitute | 妓女 | women | 女性/婦女 | carer | 照顧者 |
| protect women | 保護婦女 | women victims | 女性受害者 | childcare | 托兒 |
| daycare | 日間照顧 | double income | 雙薪 | children | 幼兒 |
| compulsory education | 義務教育 | family allowance | 家庭津貼 | divorce | 離婚 |
| domestic violence | 家暴/家庭暴力 | family and work | 家庭工作 | equal pay | 同工同酬 |
| family benefit | 家庭福利 | family subsidy | 家庭補助 | foreign bride | 外籍新娘 |
| foster parent | 繼父母 | gender | 性別 | gender-based violence | 性別暴力 |
| gender quota | 性別配額 | human trafficking | 人口販運 | kindergarten | 托兒所/幼兒園 |
| oppress women | 受害女性 | vaccine | 疫苗 | | |

Table A8: Keyword Lists

| Keyword | Count | Keyword | Count | Keyword | Count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kindergarten | 1197 | Respect women | 58 | Equal pay | 10 |
| Children | 1082 | Rape | 48 | Family benefit | 9 |
| Women | 628 | Postnatal | 53 | Protect women | 7 |
| Parenting | 312 | Birth benefit | 37 | Family and work | 5 |
| Single parent | 290 | Divorce | 35 | At home with children | 5 |
| Gender | 279 | Family subsidy | 34 | Parental leave | 4 |
| Childcare | 268 | Breastfeeding | 31 | Gender-based violence | 3 |
| Pregnant | 212 | Vaccine | 28 | Carer | 3 |
| Marriage | 204 | Abortion | 27 | Oppress women | 3 |
| Subsidy | 197 | Pater est | 38 | Women victims | 3 |
| Daycare | 187 | Birth | 22 | Family allowance | 2 |
| Domestic violence | 164 | Prostitute | 22 | Violence | 2 |
| Sexual harassment | 164 | Stalking | 22 | Foster parent | 1 |
| Babysitting | 153 | Discrimination | 21 | Second shift | 1 |
| Pornography | 126 | Foreign bride | 15 | | |
| Baby | 119 | Human trafficking | 16 | | |
| Compulsory education | 107 | Sex worker | 13 | | |
| Preschool | 63 | Birth subsidy | 12 | | |