

EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS OF GENDER IDENTITY AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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To Cite this Article

Anantha Kumar.D.R,” **EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS OF GENDER IDENTITY AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**” *Musik In Bayern*, Vol. 85, Issue 6, 2020, pp164-167

Article Info

Received: 22-02-2020 Revised: 15-03-2020 Accepted: 02-04-2020 Published: 12-04-2020

Abstract

This essay explores the complex connection between political engagement and gender identity. It investigates the ways in which gender identity affects lobbying for policies, representation, and political behaviour. The study also explores the obstacles gender-diverse people encounter in political settings and identifies ways to improve representation and inclusivity. The results highlight the necessity of thorough policy changes to overcome structural injustices and advance equal political engagement for people of all genders.

Key words: Gender, politics, political participation

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1. Introduction

Ethnic, gender, racial, and national concepts of identity have all been subject to several antiesentialist critiques. Concepts like "women," "men," "the feminine," "masculine subjectivity," and "sex" have actually been questioned in some of the most active fields of feminist theorising as misleadingly uniting diverse groups of individuals (Butler, 1990, 1993; Fausto Sterling, 1997; Garber, 1993). So why is it necessary to have another discussion on "identity"? Even with its flaws, the idea of identity is clearly still helpful to people involved in grassroots social movements. Stuart Hall suggests that instead of abandoning the idea of identity, we keep thinking about it in a deconstructed and detotalized way. Additionally, he suggests that we concentrate on the identification process, which he views as a building that is never finished.

Individual experiences and society dynamics are greatly influenced by gender identity, a highly personal and social construct. One essential component of democratic administration is political engagement, which measures how much people vote, run for office, or take part in political movements. Fostering inclusive democracies requires an understanding of how gender identity and political involvement intersect. The impact of gender identity on political representation and activity is examined in this essay. Additionally, it draws attention to the structural obstacles that gender-diverse people—including transgender, non-binary, and genderqueer people—face and suggests ways to overcome them.

2. Literature Review

Political participation is significantly impacted by traditional gender norms and expectations, according to the literature currently in publication. While cisgender women and people of colour frequently face obstacles including discrimination, under-representation, and restricted access to resources, cisgender men have long held a dominant position in political arenas. According to studies, transgender and non-binary people encounter particular difficulties, such as being excluded from policy-making processes and being misrepresented. The necessity of intersectional approaches to comprehending political engagement is emphasised by research by academics like Sarah Childs and Mona Lena Krook, who stress the significance of considering gender identity in addition to other social categories including race, class, and sexual orientation.

3. Methodology

Using a mixed-methods approach, this study combines qualitative interviews with people of different genders with quantitative analysis of voter turnout statistics. To find patterns in political engagement across gender identities, the quantitative study uses data from national election surveys. Semi-structured interviews with activists, legislators, and community leaders are used in the qualitative component to learn more about the real-life experiences of people of colour in political settings.

4. Findings

1. Disparities in Political Participation:

- Because of structural obstacles including voter ID requirements, prejudice, and a lack of resources, transgender and non-binary people are less likely to cast ballots or run for office.
- Despite being more involved than in earlier decades, cisgender women continue to encounter obstacles like gendered prejudices and unfair media portrayal.

2. Barriers to Representation:

- People of different genders frequently experience exclusionary practices in institutions and political parties.
- Non-binary and transgender identities are not legally recognised or protected, which further restricts their ability to participate in politics.

3. Policy Advocacy and Activism:

In spite of obstacles, advocates for LGBTQ+ rights have been led by gender-diverse people and their allies, who have pushed for inclusive laws and healthcare that is gender affirming.

4. Discussion

The results demonstrate how gender-diverse people are consistently under-represented in political arenas. These gaps are made worse by structural obstacles like social stigmas and discriminatory laws. Nonetheless, there is optimism for revolutionary change due to the increasing prominence of gender-diverse activists and legislators.

1. Put in place thorough anti-discrimination measures in order to promote inclusivity.
2. Encourage programs for gender-sensitive education and awareness.
3. Assure marginalised communities fair access to political platforms and resources.

5. Conclusion

Building inclusive democracies requires an understanding of how gender identity and political engagement intersect. Even while there has been progress, much more has to be done to remove structural obstacles and advance equal representation. To establish a more

equal political environment that respects and elevates the voices of every person, regardless of gender identity, policymakers, activists, and academics must work together.

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