Gender Differences in Civic Participation: A Mixed Methods Approach
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Introduction and Research Questions
Since 1980, women have voted at a higher rate than men (CAWP, 2014). However, civic participation involves more than voting as well as understanding what motivates women to participate.
- Do men and women participate civically at the same rate in the United States?
- What influences women’s civic participation in the United States?
- How do women’s issues, in particular, like gender discrimination and abortion, affect women’s civic participation?

Define Civic Participation:
- Attend political meetings, rallies, speeches
- Contact U.S. Rep/Senator
- Contact media about a political issue
- Contribute time, money, labor to candidate/campaign

Methods
I use both a statistical and focus group analysis for this study. I analyze these methods with a feminist methodology in order to understand gender-based challenges and limitations. I am also cognizant of how my standpoint, as a white, educated Democratic female, shapes my research.

Data
I use the 2012 American National Election Survey (ANES) which conducts in-person interviewing during biennial national elections. In 2012, a total of 5,914 individuals responded. I analyze 5 participation types, 2 gender discrimination issue questions, and 1 abortion issue question.

Participation Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Type</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending Rallies, Meetings, Speeches</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact U.S. Rep. or Senator</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work for Party, Candidate, Campaign</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute Money to Candidate, Campaign</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Media about a Political Issue</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Political Participation with Two-Sample T-test</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported Voting</td>
<td>86.76%</td>
<td>86.30%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Implications and Conclusion
Women participate less than men in certain participation types, but more when they care about gender discrimination or abortion issues. They still face:
- **Traditional barriers:** time, support, finances, and accessibility (Norris, 93, 2003).
- **Social forces:** media and the lack of female leaders
- **Political forces:** climate and single issue-voting

This study starts a social conversation, raises consciousness, and spurs action for women to civically engage.

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