

Why Do Young Men Oppose Gender Quotas: Group Threat and Backlash to Legislative Gender Quotas

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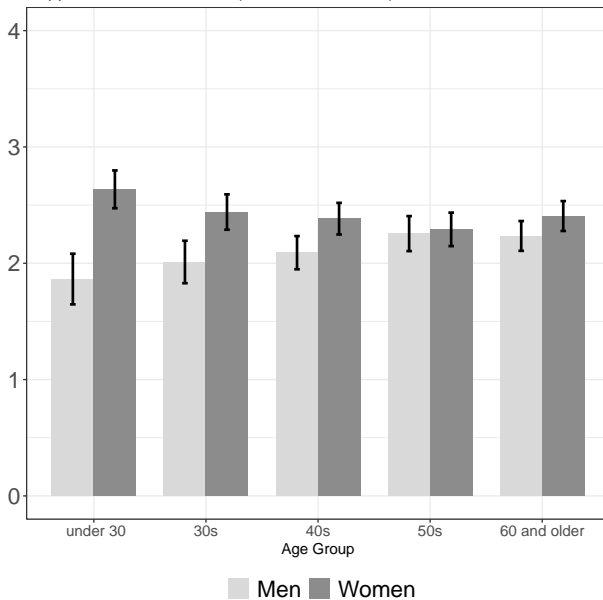
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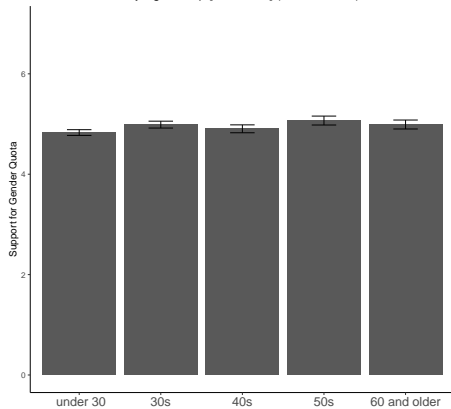
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Support for Gender Quota (South Korea, 2018)



Support for Legislative Gender Quotas
by Age Group [1–7 Scale] (LAPOP, 2012)



- Why does opposition to policy to promote legislative gender quotas persist?
- Why do young men oppose policies to promote diversity and inclusion?

- Quota laws without popular support generates a backlash ; downstream effects at citizen-level (Clayton 2015).
- Long-term impact of political attitudes formed during “impressionable years”
- Challenges to inter-group relations and social stability
- Potential source of support for populist movements

What Explains Public Opposition to Legislative Gender Quotas?

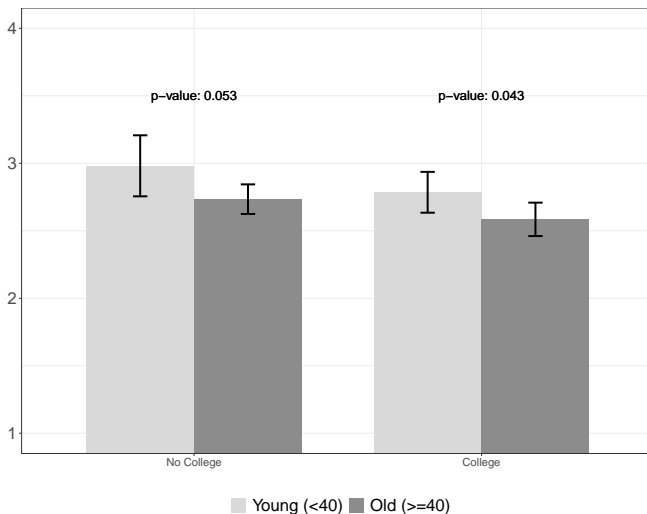
- Gender norms
- Gender stereotypes; Sexism
- Trust in government

→ Cannot explain why the opposition to quotas **coexists with** declining traditional gender norms, particularly among younger people

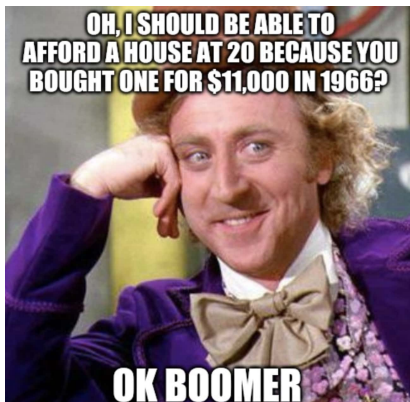
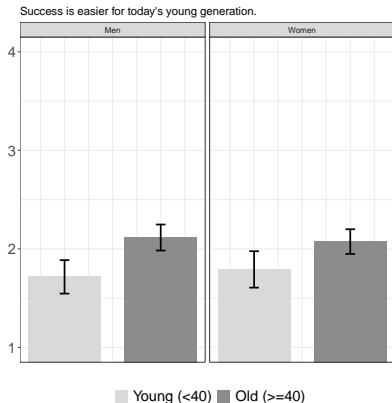
- **Status Threat:** Growing presence of women → increased status anxiety among men → **hostility** towards gender equality policies
- The effects will be **more pronounced** among those who are more vulnerable to the dwindling status → **Younger men**
 - Socially, financial and social status of men are closely related
 - Economically, high economic insecurity and precarity among younger generations
 - Early in economic career and less established

- The status threat effects will be **independent of** individuals' gender norms
 - Status threat is not solely caused by cultural norms, but by **group-based economic anxieties**
 - Liberal gender norms, but still oppose gender equality policies in fear of their negative impacts on socio-economic status of men

Perceived Economic Insecurity by Age Group and Educational Attainment



Perceived Economic Insecurity by Gender and Age Group



■ Background:

- First adopted a gender quota in 2004
- A proposal for 50/50 gender quota in 2019; Met with vehement criticism and failed to progress
- Post-industrialization: high economic vulnerability among younger generations.

■ Weak presence of other cross-cutting cleavages based on race or ethnicity

Hypotheses

- ① As the group threat to men imposed by women's relative achievement in the economic arena becomes more salient, men will express more negative attitudes toward legislative gender quotas.
- ② When the economic threat from women becomes more salient, younger men will express more negative attitudes toward legislative gender quotas than older men.

- **Two survey experiments** with a demographically representative sample in South Korea (Data balanced; Recruited by Hankook Research)
- Study 1 (2019): All males. 968 respondents. Treatment (498) designed to invoke men's status threat; Control (470)
- Study 2 (2021): Males & Females. 1000 respondents

- Respondents randomly assigned to Treatment or Control Groups
- Treatment designed to invoke **men's status threat**. Control (placebo) designed to have no treatment-related effect.
- Outcome: support for legislative gender quotas, gender equal pay, and corporate gender quotas (scale of 0 to 10)
- A **young** dummy: younger men (<40), older men (robust to different cutoffs)

전년(2018년)대비 대기업 여성 취업 증가율이 남성보다 4배 높아

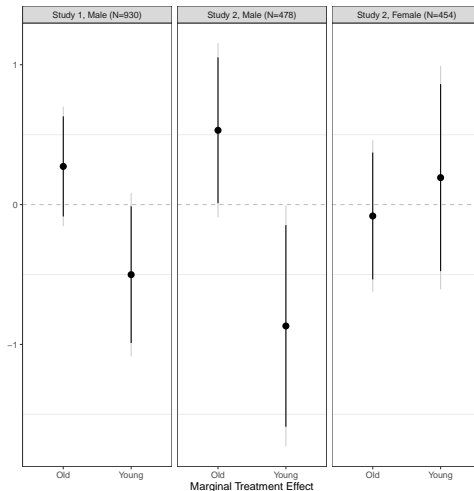


4 : 1

최근 몇 년 사이 **국내 대기업의 여성 고용인원이 급격히 증가**하고 있는 것으로 나타났다. 조사 결과 국내 57개 대기업의 지난해 신규 고용인원 중 **60%가 여성**이었고 남성의 비율은 40%에 그쳤다.

또한 국내 대기업의 전년대비 여성 고용 증가율이 **남성보다 4배 이상** 높은 것으로 나타났다.

Support for a Legislative Gender Quota



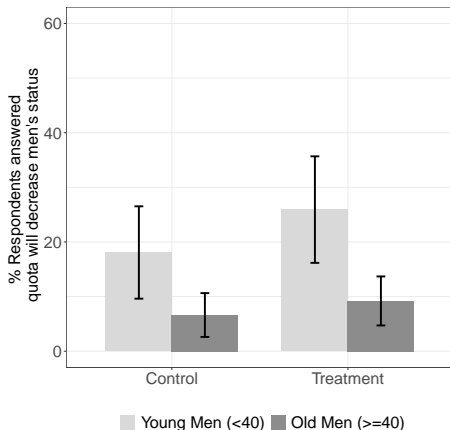
- Status threat treatment **lowers young men's support** for a legislative gender quota, but it has **little impact on old men**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Equal Pay		Corporate Quota	
	Male (1)	Female (2)	Male (3)	Female (4)
Treatment	0.711* (0.297)	-0.006 (0.259)	0.242 (0.315)	0.081 (0.266)
Young (< 40)	-0.486 (0.359)	-0.002 (0.326)	-0.677+ (0.381)	0.592+ (0.335)
Treatment × Young	-1.171* (0.507)	0.212 (0.462)	-0.943+ (0.537)	0.117 (0.474)
Constant	5.848*** (0.214)	7.157*** (0.181)	4.291*** (0.227)	6.182*** (0.186)
Observations	478	454	478	454
R ²	0.051	0.001	0.043	0.017

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

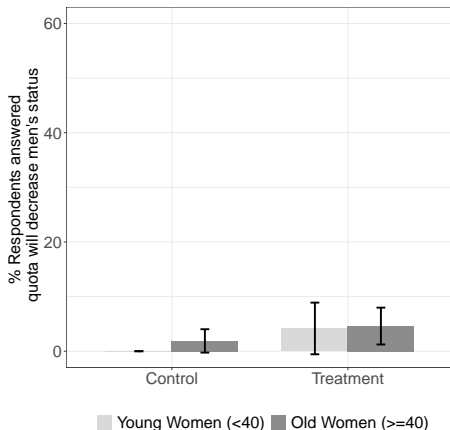
Testing Mechanisms through Open-Ended Responses

How do you think the legislative gender quota will affect men's socio-economic status?



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Why Oppose Gender Quotas? :

Selected Quotes from Open-ended Responses

Older Men

- “여성들이 능력이 부족해서 국회가 제역할을 못할 것 같다”
- “여자의 정치는 시기상조다”
- “정치 경제 역량이 검증되지 않은 여성의원의 증가는 남성의 사회경제적 지위를 엉망으로 만들것이다.”
- “가정에서의 여성이 하는 역할이 줄어 자녀 양육이나 자녀교육 및 대화가 부족할 것이다.”

Young Men

- “성별 역차별이 발생”
- “남성의 사회경제적지위가 낮아질 수 있다.”
- “여성의 지위가 올라갈것 이며 이것이 좋은 방향이면 괜찮으나 지금까지의 여성의원들이 쓸데없는 정책들만 펴 왔기 때문에 별로 좋지 않을것 같습니다”
- “남성의원이 많은 것은 기성세대의 잘못이고 젊은 남성들이 피해보면 안된다.”

Alternative Explanation: Support for Traditional Gender Norms

Table 3: The Effect of Status Threat Treatment on Traditional Gender Norm

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment	.062 (.053)	.049 (.054)	.022 (.065)	-.008 (.065)
Young (< 40)		-.181 ⁺ (.011)	-.286 ^{***} (.080)	-.277 [*] (.123)
Treatment × Young			.137 (.110)	.174 (.116)
Pre-treatment Controls		✓		✓
Wave FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	930	895	930	895
R ²	.006	.107	.024	.109

Note: The outcome variable is *Traditional Gender Norm*. Standard errors in parentheses. ⁺: p < 0.1, ^{*}: p < 0.05, ^{**}: p < 0.01, ^{***}: p < 0.001.

- Young men have more **liberal gender norms**, and the status threat treatment does **not** make them to embrace more conservative gender norms

Key Takeaways

- Liberal gender norms are **not** sufficient to generate support for gender equality policies.
- Status anxiety translates into skepticism towards policy measures meant to ensure equality and diversity in political systems. → Implications for democratic representation
- Young men are more susceptible to **status anxiety**. → Potential increase in **outgroup hostility**

- Generational effects on attitudes towards minority groups (LGBTQ, immigrants, refugees)
- Populist rhetoric and justification of anti-diversity policy; its electoral appeals.

Thank you!

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