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What do women want? Female suffrage and the size of government

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Highlights

- The economic literature has attributed part of the increase in government expenditure over the 20th century to female voting.
- We argue that current estimates of this relationship are afflicted by endogeneity bias.
- Using a novel set of instruments related to the diffusion of the introduction of the female right to vote across the globe, we find that, on average, the introduction of female suffrage did not increase either social expenditures or total government expenditure.

Abstract

The economic literature has attributed part of the increase in government expenditure over the 20th century to female voting. This is puzzling, considering that the political science literature has documented that women tended to be more conservative than men over the first

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