Article

Whose equality? Measuring group representation

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Abstract
Presence, of bodies and ideas, is often taken as the primary indicator of political equality and, hence, democratic health. Intersectionality and constructivism question the validity of measuring presence. Turning theory into practice, we propose a comparative reflexive design guided by two research questions: (1) Who are the groups? and (2) What are their problems? This reveals both prototypical and non-prototypical groups and interests, from the perspectives of politicians (from above) and citizens (from below). We suggest concrete qualitative and quantitative methodological strategies to study these questions empirically.

Keywords
constructivism, indicators, intersectionality, measurement, political equality, representation

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[…] the existence of political equality is a fundamental premise of democracy.

(Dahl, 2006: IX)

Political equality can mean (and can be enacted as) many, overlapping things […]

(Saward, 2003: 164)

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Introduction

Numbers provide the necessary hard evidence to advocate and lobby for political equality. Measuring the representation of historically underrepresented groups, such as women and racial and ethnic minorities, is central to activists and scholars when addressing political inequalities caused by sexism, racism, and discrimination. Feminists, for instance, care about gender equality. They may ask, 'How many women are present in a national parliament?' or 'How many policy bills on women's issues are accepted?' When these percentages are low, the numbers can be foundational in developing an agenda to advocate gender equality. These numbers also form the basis of a broader democratic argument: namely, that gender equality is a litmus test for political equality, which is in turn fundamental to democracy. Feminists claim that representative democracy fails without gender equality in political representation. Similar claims are made about political equality for other groups, organized on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, social class or sexual orientation.

Here, scholars and activists are questioned about *whose* equality they measure and for *whose* interests they mobilize. The combined insights of two research paradigms, which have both been applied to representation only very recently, challenge the validity of traditional measurements of political equality through crude scoring of group representation. The first paradigm, 'intersectionality', contends that groups are rarely, if ever, homogenous entities. This raises questions about within-group diversity, and the implications of, *inter alia* social class, age, sexuality, and ethnicity. It consequently forces us to consider who we should count in order to measure political equality. The second paradigm, 'constructivism', reveals that the representation of groups is neither a neutral reflection, nor an echo of societal groups and their needs in the political arena. In the political process of representation, politicians and policy makers strategically create, define, negotiate, and re-define groups as well as their specific needs and interests. The taken-for-granted group categories upon which researchers tend to rely to measure representation have become highly problematic through an intersectional and constructivist lens. It challenges us to rethink the fundamental question: what counts as representation?

In this article, we discuss the implications of intersectionality and constructivist paradigms for the study of representation. Inspired by intersectionality and constructivism, we propose a research design to measure group representation. The main objective is to highlight the importance of producing valid indicators of political equality and inequality for political scientists and equality activists, and to demonstrate how this can be done.

The following section discusses how group representation is measured in classical work. There is a rich literature on the representation of lower class or lower educated citizens, sexual minorities, racial, and ethnic minorities (e.g. Hoskyns and Rai, 1998; Pontusson, 2015; Reynolds, 2013; Ruedin, 2013). However, we focus on feminist studies of the political representation of women. Such studies provide the most comprehensive frameworks for the study of group representation, and are collectively diverse enough to apply our resultant discussion and reflections to group representation in general. Next, we flesh out the challenges that constructivism and intersectionality pose to the measurement of group representation. We then turn theory into practice. We place our concerns related to the study of representation in a broader social scientific academic debate on the problems researchers face when working with categories and identification from above and from below. Thereafter, we propose an alternative reflexive comparative research design. Using qualitative and quantitative methods, our design inductively maps how politicians

frame groups and their interests, and deductively tests the extent to which citizens identify with these identity frames. To improve the validity of indicators to measure political equality, we suggest a methodological strategy to bring into view the 'hidden' group identities and their interests.

Why and how groups are measured: The case of women's representation

Indicators are a crucial step in the measurement cycle of social science research: without indicators there are no tools for measurement. Getting the indicators right, is therefore, a fundamental step of sound qualitative and quantitative empirical work. Adcock and Collier (2001) demonstrate how indicators are at the heart of measurement. They provide a concise overview of four levels, and several tasks in the valid measurement of a broader concept in qualitative and qualitative research. The authors divide the conceptualization and measurement into a four-level sequential procedure (Adcock and Collier, 2001: 530–531). At the first level is the identification of a broad 'background concept', consisting of a constellation of potentially diverse meanings. At the second level is the formulation of a systemized concept, which involves explicit definition. At the third level are the 'indicators', referred to as measures and operationalizations (Adcock and Collier, 2001: 530–531). At the fourth level are the results: the numerical scores or the outcomes of classification. After the completion of this procedure, the cycle moves back again, from level four to one, to refine the indicators, modify the systemized concept, and revisit the background concept. The actual measurement of a concept involves the interaction among levels 2 (systemized concept), 3 (indicator), and 4 (scores) (Adcock and Collier, 2001: 530).

Democracy is one of the key central background concepts in political science. It is fair to say that many political scientists are concerned with the quality of democracy, and that this concern drives a wide variety of studies about the functioning of the political institutions and political processes. It is associated with a myriad of conflicting meanings and understandings. What democracy should be, and what the standards of good democracy entail, have been topics of debate for centuries. This implies that studying democracy requires systemizing its concepts. In those endeavours, four principles are often invoked: political equality, inclusion, expressive freedom, and transparency (Saward, 2003: 162). There are fierce discussions about the precise meanings of these 'concepts'. Yet, 'we – this community of citizens and scholars, situated as we are – know political equality is critical to what we call democracy' (Saward, 2003: 163). This is based on the claim that democracy requires that every member of the demos should be entitled to effective participation and equality in voting (Dahl, 2006: 9). 'Political equality' can be understood as the equal inclusion of all members of the demos in political institutions. 'Equal representation' then becomes a crucial indicator of political equality.

In recent years, political *gender* equality has become an influential indicator of political equality. Feminists have fought for gender equality in politics for decades, and when women obtained the right to vote after successful campaigns by the suffragettes, women's movements advocated for equal presence in political institutions such as parliaments, executives, and political parties. Movements justified their claims around a broad set of arguments, including fairness and justice, a better representation of women's interests, and utilitarian claims of a more productive usage of human capital. In the 1980s–1990s, feminist theorists included this activist thinking in political theories (Dahlerup, 1988; Mansbridge, 1999; Williams, 1989; Young, 2000). They argued that if women are not
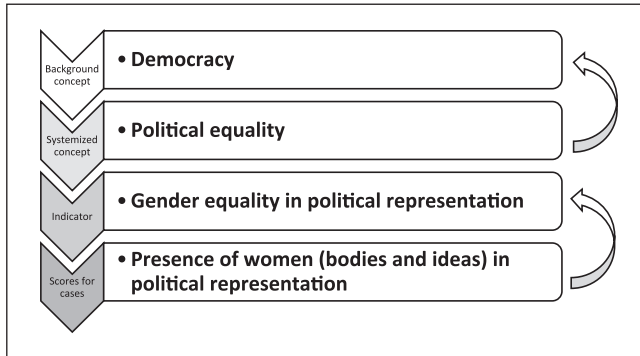
Figure 1. Classical feminist measurement of political equality.

equally included in political decision-making, the political system sends a signal that women are not full political citizens (Philips, 1995). Low numbers of women, or worse still, their absence, may hinder the inclusion of women's issues and interests, as their most ardent defenders are excluded. In Philips' 'politics of presence' theory, women's presence – both the bodily presence of women, and the presence or inclusion of women's ideas, interests, perspectives, needs, and wishes – is a powerful indicator of democracy.

Figure 1 illustrates how women's representation is measured in classical feminist work. In feminist studies of representation, 'equal representation' is operationalized, as gender equality in political representation. The measurement includes the study of women's presence in (1) various phases of the electoral process, such as numbers of female voters, candidates, candidates elected, and women's interests in party platforms; (2) various political institutions, such as representative assemblies and political parties; and (3) decision-making processes at different levels, such as national, infra- and supra-national levels (see Childs and Lovenduski, 2013; Kittilson, 2013; Krook and Swindt-Bayer, 2013; McBride and Mazur, 2013).

In the past decade, feminist political scientists have been concerned with the valid measurement of gender equality in political representation. They have increasingly 'moved upwards' in the measurement cycle, to refine indicators, modify the systemized concept, and revisit the background concept. For instance, scholars have argued that numerical presence as an indicator of political equality is too simplistic, reasoning that positions of power are more appropriate. The underlying idea is that presence alone is not enough. Women, for instance, can be included as 'tokens' to meet gender quotas, but they can only have an impact if they also occupy leadership positions as party leaders, heads of state, ministers, and so on (Dahlerup, 2006; Franceschet and Piscopo, 2013). Similarly, laws and policies concerning women, not only need to be in place, they also need efficient implementation in order to be meaningful (Mazur and Pollock, 2009).

A further stream of research argues that the operationalization of the representation of women's interests and issues is tricky (see Celis, 2009; Celis et al., 2014a). Laws and policies on equal pay, maternity leave, or reproductive rights, may indicate the extent to which the political system is open to the needs, wishes, and demands of women. But, to what extent are those specific policy issues representative for *all* women in society? These critiques raise the question whether we measure what we should be measuring: is the representation of groups as we traditionally operationalize it a valid indicator of political equality? The concern over valid measurement of groups and identity as constructs, is

not new (Chandra and Wilkinson, 2008; Hall, 1996). But the combined insights of the intersectionality and constructivism research paradigms for the study of political representation, as we explain next, sharpens this concern.

The intersectional paradigm

While intersectional thinking emerged from interdisciplinary black feminist scholarship in the 1990s, it has only recently been applied in European political science (Erzeel and Mügge, 2016; Mügge and De Jong, 2013). Intersectionality is rooted in a critique of hegemonic Western feminist work for being inattentive to race discrimination. The experience of black women, scholars argued, was radically different as they face sexism and racism simultaneously. The central take home message was that the positions of groups and individuals in society are determined by a combination of identities such as gender, race, class, sexuality, age, ethnicity, and ability (Collins, 1998; Crenshaw, 1991). The intersection of these identities generates positions of marginalization as well as privilege, depending on the specific time, context, and space in which they operate. The extension of intersectional thinking in social science over the past decade has made an impact in the interdisciplinary area of gender studies, and has gradually become a field of its own (Cho et al., 2013; Lutz et al., 2011). A product of the combined insight of feminist studies and critical race studies, intersectionality taps into critiques of essentialist gender categories as well as primordialist ethnic categories, respectively.

In political science, Hancock (2007a, 2007b) advocates intersectionality as a research paradigm consisting of both a body of normative theory and empirical research. Work that applies the intersectional paradigm to political representation is an emerging field. Scholars have studied the 'classical' mechanisms that the mainstream literature identifies as explanatory factors for the political inclusion and exclusion of disadvantaged groups in elected office (Mügge and Erzeel, 2016). Mechanisms that have been scrutinized are the influence of candidate recruitment and selection (Bejarano, 2013; Freidenvall, 2016; Hardy-Fanta, 2013), electoral systems, quotas (Bird, 2016; Davidson-Schmich, 2016), and identity networks (Beckwith, 2000; Evans, 2014; Laperrière and Lépinard, 2016). While early work has predominantly focused on the intersection of gender and ethnicity or race, forthcoming work includes other identities such as religion (Hughes, 2016; Murray, 2016), age (Randall, 2016), generation (Mügge, 2016b), ability, and sexuality (Evans, 2016).

Empirical work that applies intersectionality to representation demonstrates that the intersectional lens generates more refined results than the mainstream unitary, or multiple approaches, in which categories are studied in isolation or next to each other respectively. In a large-N cross national analysis, Hughes (2011) shows that gender quotas benefit the candidate selection of ethnic majority women, but exclude ethnic minority women. Ethnic quotas, in turn, facilitate the election of ethnic minority men, but do not encourage the inclusion of ethnic minority women. Other studies find that ethnic minority women candidates have an advantage over ethnic minority male candidates. Their double identity in terms of gender and ethnicity is attractive for parties that want to appeal to a broad electorate. Additionally, these candidates have more opportunities to form strategic coalitions within women's *and* ethnic minority networks. Ethnic minority men, in contrast, are disadvantaged because selectors fear the competition they bring for male incumbents, and the negative image they have among voters (Celis and Erzeel, 2015; Celis et al., 2014b).

These studies illustrate that findings based on one single category cannot be extrapolated to the entire group. Two contradictory theories explain why that is the case (see

Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008). First, is the 'double jeopardy'-theory (Beale, 1970). This suggests that people who accumulate more than one subordinate group identity, such as being a woman and belonging to an ethnic minority, are more disadvantaged than people with only one subordinate group identity, such as ethnic majority women. This is evinced by the examples of Hughes' study, discussed in the previous paragraph. Second, is 'intersectional invisibility'-theory (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008). The starting point of this theory is the 'subordinate male target hypothesis'. This states that ethnocentric ideology is more discriminatory towards ethnic minority men than ethnic minority women, because competition predominantly takes place between men in androcentric environments. Hence, in contrast to the double jeopardy theory, the subordinate male target hypothesis predicts that people with a single devalued identity experience more disadvantage compared to people with multiple devalued identities. Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008) claim that this applies to a broader set of non-prototypical members of a group. They reason that androcentric, ethnocentric, and heterocentric ideologies interactively divide groups into prototypical members and non-prototypical members of their identity group. People with multiple subordinate-group identities are non-prototypical members and might experience 'intersectional invisibility'. Intersectional invisibility allows non-prototypical group members 'to more easily escape many of the actively discriminatory practices that target their group compared to members who more closely fit the prototypes of these groups' (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008: 6). In contrast, prototypical members, are subjected to more active forms of prejudice and discrimination, and thereby, function as a lightning rod, safeguarding the non-prototypical members from the most active forms of oppression. Celis et al. (2014b) confirm the 'intersectional invisibility'-theory.

These theoretical and empirical studies show that gender and ethnicity interact, generating positions of political equality or inequality. Consequently, gender equality is not equally distributed among categories at the intersection of gender and ethnicity. Indeed, some women and men can experience more gender equality than other women and men. If we score women's bodily presence without attention to variety within the group of women and men, we generate numbers that present differences between the *sexes* in access to political representation. But, it will not measure the extent to which *gender* in its interaction with other meaningful discriminatory mechanisms generates positions of underrepresentation or overrepresentation. Nor does such an approach reveal how gender produces political (in)equality as gender never works in isolation from other discriminatory mechanisms. As a result, such scores do not form a reliable indicator of political equality, because they may well hide inequalities that tend to fall out of the scope of mainstream research. Thus, they remain invisible. Let us illustrate this point with some of the earlier reviewed studies.

Hughes (2011) suggests that if the intersection of gender and ethnicity is not taken into account, research will simply show that gender quotas lead to more gender equality, and thus improve democracy. We would not have noticed, nor would we be able to acknowledge, that gender quotas disadvantage ethnic minority women. The same goes for the finding on ethnic quotas. The disadvantaged position of ethnic minority women and the relatively advantaged position of ethnic majority women are caused by the way that gender operates in interaction with ethnicity. Celis et al. (2014b) added two significant insights. First, within groups, advantaged and disadvantaged positions are not static. Second, men's representation is crucial to understanding gender equality. Ethnic minority men's gender is co-constituted by their disadvantaged position and it is hence essential to recognize, and reveal it, when assessing gender equality.
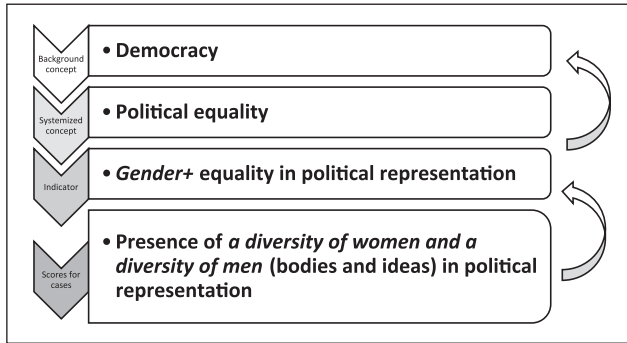
Figure 2. Intersectional measurement of political equality.

We follow a similar line of reasoning with regard to the presence of women's ideas. If scholars ignore the diversity of women's issues and interests, they risk making claims about increases in laws and policies that favour women, based on the issues and interests of prototypical women only. In doing so, they potentially hide the fact that non-prototypical women's interests are structurally excluded, or only included when they serve the political exclusion of non-prototypical men. Laws on banning the Islamic headscarf illustrate this point (Celis, 2013). Proponents of the ban claim that it furthers gender equality. From this perspective, laws and measures to ban the veil are implemented to represent women's interests, and therefore indicate gender equality. If we, however, also take the voices of Muslim women that claim the right to wear the veil as a form of self-expression into account, this understanding of gender equality becomes highly problematic. Severs (2010) has shown that the perspective and voice of Muslim women in the headscarf debate was ignored by some political parties, and only partially represented by other parties. In this case, politicians have made many claims about the interests of Muslim women, but the political debate and its outcome predominantly reflected a prototypical women's perspective. The presence on the political agenda of women's issues, or a law concerning women's issues can, in our view, hardly count as women's representation when it is not responsive to the views of those concerned. Consequently, it cannot be taken to be a valid indicator of political equality.

Two conclusions follow for the measurement of gender equality as indicators of political equality. First, within-group diversity needs to be part of the measurement. In this way, the interaction between gender and other discriminatory mechanisms is acknowledged. Figure 2 indicates this with '*gender+* equality'. The '+' stands for a range of open-ended identities formed by the intersection of gender with other discriminatory mechanisms. Second, gender equality relating to men must be taken into account. Together, these principles bring us closer to a revised intersectional measurement of political equality.

The constructivist paradigm

In the constructivist paradigm, representation starts with those who are actually doing the representation: the representatives. This turns traditional thinking about representation upside down. For decades, the citizen, and not the representative, was at the core of representation theories (Pitkin, 1967). In classical work on representation, the citizenry defines what the group of politicians should 'look like' and what they should 'do' in order to be representative. It is the composition of the citizenry that defines the extent to which

representative assemblies are considered representative in descriptive terms. Furthermore, it is citizens' interests, needs, wishes, and perspectives that ought to be the content of what politicians do. The idea that citizens 'come first' in the representation process is questioned in recent constructivist scholarship (Mansbridge, 2011; Rehfeld, 2006; Urbinati and Warren, 2008; Warren, 2002).

In constructivist thinking, representation is a process of *claiming* to represent groups of citizens, and *framing* issues as being of importance to them (Saward, 2010). Politicians present themselves to citizens as a representative for a specific group, for instance 'working mothers'. Politicians make claims about the nature and interests of that particular group. A politician who claims to represent 'working mothers', for example, identifies the problems of this group and communicates what they need. Next, it is up to the working mothers to decide whether they accept that politician as their representative, and whether they identify with how the politician portrays the group and their interests.

The idea that representation is a creation of politicians poses a major challenge to classic measurements of representation, particularly substantive representation. In classical work, substantive representation occurs when the content of political and policy decision-making reflects the issues and the interests of the citizens (Pitkin, 1967). Representation succeeds when politicians do what citizens expect them to do. In these conceptions of representation, in which the representation of citizens' interests is considered to be a bottom-up process starting with citizens, the linkage with their representatives is linear: citizens have concerns that representatives take care of, or neglect. To what extent that is the case is straightforwardly measured by establishing the degree of congruence between citizen's *pre-existing* views and interests on the one hand, and the content of representatives' decision-making or attitudes on the other (Arnold and Franklin, 2012; Miller and Stokes, 1963; Powell, 2004).

In the constructivist approach, citizens and their concerns are constructions of politicians. As a result, the linkage between what citizens want and need becomes more complex. Citizens may agree with how they are represented, even when they had a different idea about what was in their interest beforehand, or even no idea at all. They can *a posteriori* agree with how they, as a group with specific interests, were represented. As a consequence, substantive representation can no longer be measured by establishing the degree of congruence between the issues and interests citizens have *prior* to the representation process on the one hand, and what politicians do on the other.

Whether or not citizens agree with how they are represented needs to be included in the measurement of representation. The latter cannot be assumed, not even in the absence of citizen protests rejecting claims made by politicians. Silence cannot be read as a match between what politicians claim and what citizens need, because not everyone has the same opportunities to contest representative claims (Severs, 2010). In particular, marginalized groups in society might lack specific resources, such as the networks, knowledge, and skills to publicly voice how they perceive themselves and their interests. Silence might well be the result of inequality, and this may result in the incapacity to influence political representation and reject non-responsive or wrong representations. It is clear that in such instances, representative claims (e.g. speeches, laws, policies, etc.) should not count as substantive representation for the establishment of an indicator of political equality.

In addition, non-prototypical group members' intersectional invisibility increases the risk, that their issues and interests are not represented or misrepresented (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008: 7–10; Strolovitch, 2006). First, politicians often do not perceive non-prototypical members, such as ethnic minority women's organizations, as spokespersons

for the broader groups' issues and interests. In other words, non-prototypical issues and interests are considered to be partial. Prototypical women and their interests, in contrast, are seen as applying to the whole group and hence tend to get prioritized. Second, non-prototypical group members' experiences are deemphasized in the historical narratives and the historical record of the group's marginalization. Politicians that rely on their own information and imagination for their representation, as the constructivist approach to representation foregrounds, risk missing non-prototypical groups' perceptions on their issues and needs.

In sum, constructivism and intersectionality warn against the assumption that the claims made by representatives to represent groups apply to the entire group. Chances are that they only substantively represent prototypical group members. Non-prototypical members' experience is less likely to be the source of representative claims. In this light, intersectionality and constructivism challenges scholars to: (1) empirically investigate whether representative claims correspond to women's needs and perceptions, and to which groups of women and (2) to consider which subgroups are excluded.

The way the representation of women's issues and interests is traditionally measured does not fully meet those challenges. First, the classical measurement of women's substantive representation does not capture how well the ideas that representatives hold about women, match with the needs and ideas of actual women citizens. Second, scholars have only recently started to pay attention to diversity within groups of women.

From theory to practice: Measuring group representation

The constructivist and intersectional paradigms suggest that groups, and group interests in representation, are not fixed entities, but exist on a flexible spectrum. Groups and interests are constituted by context and time-specific intersecting identities on the one hand, and through politicians' acts on the other hand. A combined constructivist and intersectional approach to representation calls for a different kind of measurement of group representation operationalized as the presence of bodies and ideas. To assess the quality of representation, we need to know which bodies to count and assess, and whether the political ideas about those groups and their interests match the ideas held by citizens. In this section, we propose a design to operationalize groups, their numerical representation, and the representation of their ideas.

Measuring the representation of disadvantaged groups is guided by two consecutive research questions (Figure 3). (Q1) operationalizes groups – this question is foundational in measuring representation, for it determines *who* (whose bodies and ideas) will be counted. (Q2) reveals the specific needs of this group, and thus should form the backbone of policy initiatives. In addition, it assesses the extent to which politicians address their interests. The answers to Q1 and Q2 provide scores of a groups' presence in political representation on which conclusions of political equality can be drawn.

There is a wide scholarly agreement that there is a distinction between personality based, or self-identification, and categorical ascribed identity (see Gil-White, 1999; Massey, 2007). With regard to ascribed identity, group categories are an indispensable tool which allows politicians to indicate who they represent. Such categorisations are used to track a groups' socio-economic or political status, and this information often forms the backbone of policy-making (Krebbekx et al., 2016; Mügge and Van Der Haar, 2016; Yanow and Van Der Haar, 2013). Pioneering work demonstrates that categories in political representation are intersecting, and there are some cues that politicians deny
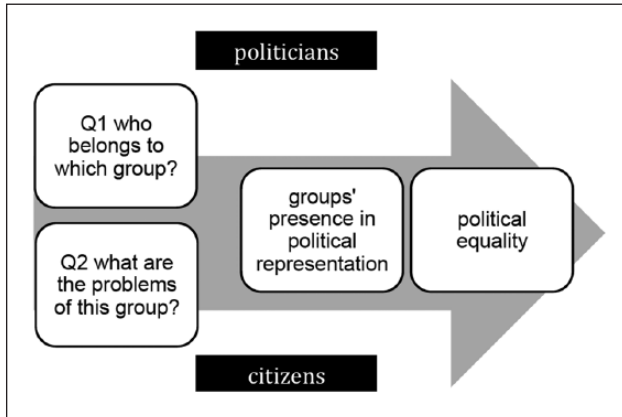
Figure 3. Key questions to measure the representation of groups.

categories that are created by governments, research institutions, and alike in, for example, media appearances during campaigns (Rosenberger and Stöckl, 2016). However, there is only anecdotal evidence that shows how citizens respond to categories applied by politicians when speaking to their constituency and addressing their needs (in contrast, see Bird, 2015). Generally, researchers who study inequality simply have to work with the categories and numbers they have at their disposal which are usually provided by national census data or existing survey material. Scholars of migration, for example, have critically reflected on these hurdles regarding research on ethnic minorities, and pointed to sampling problems (Font and Méndez, 2013; Mügge, 2016a). Should one target a group based on self-identification or on ascribed categories? And what should one do when adequate sampling frames do not exist in the surveys at hand? For instance, in France, no information related to ethnicity is allowed in any official records. Consequently, finding appropriate sample frames for certain types of surveys is difficult (Font and Méndez, 2013: 32). Sampling frames are thus often limited by the context in which researchers operate.

In such a research approach, setting so-called 'boundaries' that distinguish one group from another are from above; these are ascribed. There is an extensive constructivist theoretical literature on boundary-making (e.g. Wimmer, 2008) that conceptualizes how ethnic group members move between ethnic boundaries. For instance, group members may distance themselves from racial boundaries through upward social mobility and a changing social class position. This literature criticizes understanding ethnic groups as self-evident units of observation and recommends that scholars: (1) question whether or not an observed pattern is 'ethnic', (2) pay attention to those individuals who are 'lost to the group', and (3) pay attention to the variety of boundary-making strategies that one finds among individuals sharing the same background (Wimmer, 2009: 264–265). An intersectional approach meets these requirements as it questions group identities, aims to bring into view 'lost'-or non-prototypical group members, and recognizes diversity among individuals who share a range of characteristics.

In practice, self-identification often turns out differently than predicted by theoretical frameworks. The primordialism versus constructivism debate on ethnicity illustrates this point. Primordialists assume that ethnic identity is fixed once constructed (Bayar, 2009;

Hale, 2004; Van Evera, 2001). Constructivists reject this position on theoretical and empirical grounds. In addition, this is politically contested when the 'fixing of identities' is part of nationalist political programmes and strategies. Nevertheless, sometimes citizens do self-identify with given categories. Gil-White (1999), for instance, has found his research participants to be heavily primordialist. In other words, the perspectives of citizens may conflict just as much with primordialist and constructivist theoretical critiques, as when they are categorized by politicians. Whether or not, ascribed identities match self-identities is always contextual. In the light of this, Brubaker (2016) emphasizes the importance of reflexive analyses of the intersection between self-identification and identifications by others.

A reflexive analysis enables researchers on group representation to take the intersectional dimension of groups into account, precisely because it perceives identity, and the relation between identities, as an open empirical question. It also fits the constructivist view on representation as it prescribes a comparison between the constructions of identities in the political representation of marginalized groups from above (the politician) and below (the citizen). With such a comparison, we can approach identity as contextual, but at the same time, examine how such identities are influenced by political and historical structures.

In what follows, we propose concrete methodological tools to study the interaction between ascribed identification and self-identification. To study Q1 and Q2 empirically, we need to establish: (1) how politicians construct groups and their interests, (2) how citizens construct groups and their interests, and (3) a comparison of where these views overlap or diverge. This evolves in three steps. First, we start inductively to map the groups that are constructed by politicians. Second, we deductively test to what extent, and under what circumstances, people identify with the ascribed categories provided by politicians and how they possibly intersect. The third step is to establish inductively if there are groups that are hidden, and if so, what do they look like and what are their interests.

Politicians, groups and their interests

Critical frame analysis is a useful tool to map how politicians construct groups and the problems they attach to them. It moves beyond individual specific usages of wording and language. Instead, it uncovers frames or 'schemata of interpretation' (Goffman, 1974: 21) in the ways things and phenomena are discussed (Bacchi, 1999; Rein and Schön, 1993; Snow and Benford, 1988). Moreover, it focuses on how political problems and solutions are represented, and reveals the actors that are included in these discourses (Verloo, 2007). To analyse and interpret data, critical frame analysis is predominantly used to scrutinize policy documents, but it can also be applied in analyses of other kinds of texts, such as parliamentary speeches or interviews with politicians (Meier, 2008; Verloo, 2005).

The core of critical frame analysis in studies to measure gender equality is a set of so-called 'sensitizing questions' that the researcher applies to political discourses. This approach is also suitable to measure political equality related to a myriad of other identities and their intersections, including race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, and so on. Sensitizing questions identify a number of things: who voices the issue, the different representations that actors give to a specific problem and its solutions, the roles that are attributed to policy actors (*who faces the problem? who causes it? who needs to solve it?*); the extent to which gender, and its intersections with other inequalities, is related to the problem and its solution; and the norms underpinning the problems and their related

solutions (Verloo and Lombardo, 2007). Answers to these sensitizing questions are given in the form of codes. The codification process results in a 'super-text' that creates meaning at a more abstract level of a particular political discourse. These super-texts enable grouping of political discourses based on what these discourses have in common or diverge on, and facilitates typologies based on the frames they foreground. Critical frame analysis of representative claims uncovers their building blocks, that is, their perspective on the kind of problem, the causes thereof, and the solutions. It allows to see dominant and marginal frames, and shifts and evolutions in those respective frames.

In terms of intersectionality, critical frame analysis enables researchers to highlight groups that are constructed by politicians, but do not fit the unitary or multiple categories that are used in databases of national bureaus of statistics or census. In critical frame analysis, researchers do not recycle fixed categories which are challenged by the intersectional paradigm, but approach identities as an open empirical question. Concretely, critical frame analysis will provide researchers with a list of groups which explicitly or implicitly are identified by politicians as disadvantaged, and the target of specific policies.

Citizens, groups, and their interests

To establish how citizens construct groups and their interests we need to (1) deductively test the extent to which they identify with the frames that politicians apply to them and (2) inductively study which groups have remained invisible to politicians. The starting point of this step is the group identity frames that have been generated deductively. If the identity frames correspond with categories that are used in national statistics, official documents, or surveys, then sampling will be straightforward. Depending on the (national) context and available data, researchers may draw a representative sample and use this for an online or offline survey, and ask under which conditions they identify with these identity frames, and how far they acknowledge the problems that politicians have ascribed.

To improve external validity, this will ideally be combined with in-depth interviews with group representatives and elites. Interviewees that may be approached are, for instance, spokespersons from civil society organizations or other public figures who form bridges between grassroots and electoral politics. If the identity frames are new, in the sense that these are not visible in existing statistics and data, sampling is more complicated. In this case, sampling can follow a different snowballing technique by starting with group leaders who are visible to politicians, followed by a survey among individuals.

The methodological strategy to uncover 'hidden' political identity groups is more complex. It challenges researchers to be creative and to develop online ethnographic strategies to find them (cf. Gatson, 2011; Hine, 2008; Van Den Bos and Nell, 2006). One strategy we expect to work well, particularly in Western democracies, is immersion in the online communities of Twitter, Facebook and Internet fora. The web is increasingly a platform for the airing of political ideas by politicians and citizens (Jacobs and Spierings, 2016). Online ethnography may identify a selection of visible and hidden political issues. Visible issues often collide with salient political agendas, such as terrorist attacks, ethnic profiling, healthcare, or economic crises. Hidden issues are not commonly voiced by elected officials or civil society leaders of prototypical groups. Immersion can be structured by the following questions: 'who engages in online activity, but does not fit the prototypical group's view that is connected to this issue by politicians?' and 'how do they present their specific needs with respect to this topic?'.

   To test whether or not the identity frames constructed by a critical frame analysis of social media match citizen self-identification, online research participants will be approached to participate in a survey. The sample of respondents will admittedly be biased towards a younger group of information and communication technologies (ICT) literate people, and will potentially miss older people who are not online. One way to broaden the sample is to initiate snowballing for offline group members by asking respondents to provide contact details of older group members who are not part of the online community. In order to generate comparable data, this survey should include the same questions as the survey conducted in the prior deductive round. Finally, the survey should be complemented by in-depth interviews with 'leaders' of these new groups, such as administrators of Facebook groups or Internet fora, and with members of the other groups identified via snowballing.

   The sequence of research steps to study Q1 and Q2 move from induction (identity frames by politicians), deduction (testing to what extent citizens identify with these identity frames), and induction (mapping the non-prototypical groups and their interests). Through comparison, this design allows researchers to systematically measure, quantitatively and qualitatively, the match between ascribed identities (from above) and self-identification (from below). It will provide researchers with a list of prototypical, and non-prototypical groups, whose bodies and interests we can count to measure their representation. The more non-prototypical groups and interests we find, the more disadvantaged are they expected to be. Eventually, this will allow us to draw valid conclusions about the levels of political equality enjoyed by a disadvantaged group.

Conclusion

Counting bodies, and the ideas associated with these bodies, is central to the way political scientists traditionally measure the representation of disadvantaged groups. Thus, the presence of bodies and ideas have always been valuable indicators of political equality, and consequently a measure of a democratic health. A combined intersectional and constructivist approach to representation questions the overarching validity of such measurement. Intersectionality invites us to study identity, and the relations between identities, as open empirical questions; constructivists believe that politicians create groups and their interests. Groups and their interests are not just 'there' but change over time; they are flexible, changeable, and exist on a spectrum that is intrinsically related to both the political context, and the politicians who do the job of representation as part of their daily work.

   While the intersectional and constructivist paradigms have inspired several generations of scholars, to our knowledge, a unified approach to explaining the complexities of political representation is new. This approach taps into criticisms that are at the core of feminist and critical race studies: the essentialist and primordial usage of categories. This novel lens invites us to revisit and refine indicators of political representation in ways that traditional models rule out by definitional fiat. To increase the chances that we are counting the right bodies and ideas, we encourage scholars to turn theory into practice. We propose two basic questions to improve indicators of representation: (Q1) Who belongs to which group? and (Q2) What are the political issues and interests of this group? We strongly suggest that a reflexive comparative design will more capably reveal the extent to which group identity frames and interests are constructed by politicians (from above) and match citizens' perspectives in their diversity (from below). Not only do Q1 and Q2 force us to rethink existing categories and labels, they will also reveal groups and interests

that are 'hidden'. Such groups are non-prototypical, in the sense that their collective identity is not mobilized by political actors, and their interests are not voiced by political leaders. The higher the representation of non-prototypical groups and their interests, the higher the level of political equality. At the same time, the continuous comparison between the construction of groups and interests from above and from below, acknowledges the influence on these processes by historical and political structures.

We present concrete methodological tools to study Q1 and Q2 empirically, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Critical frame analysis of documents such as interviews, policy bills, and parliamentary questions will guide the inductive inquiry of groups and their interests as constructed by politicians. Surveys then can be used to test whether these frames match citizens' perspectives. To uncover non-prototypical groups and their interests, we suggest online ethnographic analyses of new social media, combined with offline in-depth interviews and surveys. Once groups and their interests are mapped as perceived from below and above, scholars can return to the common practice of counting bodies and ideas. For sure, it will take time and money to make this turn, but given the importance of valid numbers, we believe this will be a worthwhile investment. In the end, numbers are indispensable for any political actor to address inequality. Contemporary societies are diverse and far from equal. It is time to get these numbers right.

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