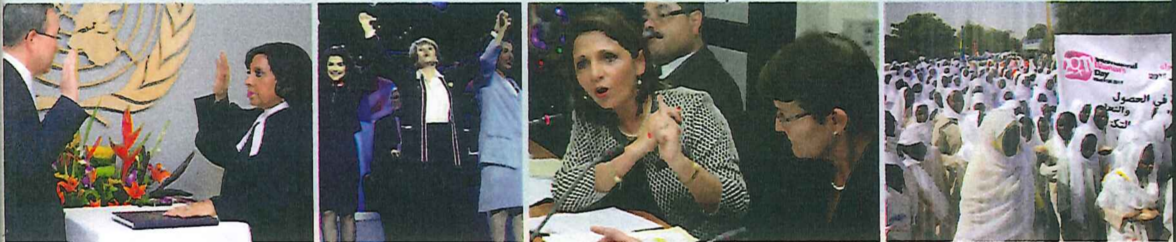
REPRESENTATION



The Case of Women

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This volume grew out of a troubling interest we both had with how to measure women's interests so that we could empirically (and in particularly statistically) examine the link between descriptive and substantive representation. Many fine works of political theory about representation of women indicate that there *should* be a link between descriptive and substantive representation. But as with so many topics in social science, it is important to test whether reality meets the expectations of theory. As long-time students of institutions in Latin American politics, where descriptive representation of women has increased in many countries to notable numbers, we thought the opportunity was ripe for empirical investigation of this theorized link with a comparative cross-national research design. However, implementing such a test meant grappling with the problem of how to measure women's interests, which led to discussions of what women's interests are.

Some scholars studying substantive representation have chosen to focus on one issue that obviously matters to women broadly and to feminists (e.g., adoption of laws to stop violence against women or abortion rights laws). For the research we wanted to do, however, that strategy was not feasible because it would have required us to determine ex ante what type of interests elected or appointed officials saw as their representational job, or as their legislative agenda. Moreover, we struggled with the different salience of issues given different cultural contexts and levels of development (e.g., while women in the United States fight for equal pay for equal work, women in other parts of the world may be fighting for the right to inherit property). Because we wanted to be able to evaluate and compare the representational activities of officials in multiple countries, who would be affiliated with an ideologically diverse array of parties, and who could hail from different socioeconomic backgrounds and possibly different ethnic groups and religious groups, it was not feasible to select one issue—even if that issue was clearly an important and fundamental right for women—that would be a valid measure across space and time.

This concern led to organization of a round table titled "The Meaning and Measurement of Women's Interests" held at the 2010 Midwest Political Science Association conference. The panel produced a wealth of ideas and showed the

CHAPTER 4

Representing Women

Defining Substantive Representation of Women

DRUDE DAHLERUP

INTRODUCTION

Most campaigns for enhancing women's political representation have made use of the argument that women will make a difference in politics. Politics has for too long been male dominated and consequently, it is argued, politics is mainly made in the interest of men, neglecting women's interests. For feminist research this expectation represents a challenge. Theoretically it is a challenge, since there is no agreement among feminist researchers about what constitutes "women's interests" and thus when women politicians can be said to represent women citizens. Empirically it is a challenge, since both feminist activists and feminist researchers differ considerably in their evaluation of the effect of having more women in elected assemblies. What do we expect from the growing number of women politicians? Here it is important to keep in mind that obviously, not all women politicians want or are able to "represent women."

And what do women want? The following quotations show two opposite positions in this discussion, one arguing that women say "we" too seldom, and the other that they do it too often:

Simone de Beauvoir in *Le Deuxième Sexe* from 1949:

> But women do not say "We," except at some congress for feminists or similar formal demonstration; men say "women," and women use the same word in referring to themselves. They do not authentically assume a subjective attitude. (Beauvoir 1953: 11)

Judith Butler in the first sentences of her book *Gender Trouble* from 1990:

> For the most part, feminist theory has assumed that there is some existing identity, understood through the category of women, who not only initiates feminist interests and goals within discourse, but constitutes the subject for whom political representation is sought. (Butler 1990: 3)

I will argue that Simone de Beauvoir was right that women in general do not position themselves as a political subject, a "we," even if they are constructed as a group by men and even by themselves: women are talkative; women belong in the home; women do not understand mathematics; or the more recent, women are from Venus. Beauvoir's statement was, of course, more appropriate in the 1940s, before the modern feminist mobilization starting in the 1960s and 1970s, but it holds true even today.

Judith Butler is right, that there is no unified women's identity. But I will argue that she is wrong when she criticizes the feminist movement for seeking political representation for some assumed essentialist common identity of women. From in-depth studies of first and second wave feminist movements, including my own studies, it becomes clear that the feminist movements were always well aware of the fact that there is no unitary women's "we" and that, consequently, the movement had to work hard to try to construct a common political cause, a *political* identification among women across social and political cleavages, in order to change male dominance. Butler later modified her critique of women acting as a group (Butler 1999: preface), but her initially strong criticism of what she and other critics label "identity politics" has become highly influential in the present individualistic era.

Concepts of different "interests" are central to most thinking about representative democracy, yes, even in earlier conceptions—since systems of representation predate democracy (Dahlerup 2011). In this chapter I will discuss the contested concepts of "women's interests" and "substantive representation of women" from a theoretical point of view (in feminist theory), as well as from a perspective of how to make these concepts relevant in empirical analyses.

Following this introduction, in the second section I discuss various definitions of "women's substantive representation," a widely used term in contemporary research on women in politics. The third section discusses variations in scope of the *who, what, how,* and *where* of representation from a gender perspective. Do we see a tendency toward concept stretching here, since most research on "women's substantive representation" seems to start out from Hanna Pitkin? In the fourth and fifth sections, the theoretical foundations of the concepts of women's interest and the representation of women are discussed. It is argued (in contrast to Beckwith, Chapter 2 of this volume) that at the most fundamental level a concept of women's interest can only be derived

from feminist theories about male dominance and patriarchy, which is why a parallel concept of "the substantive representation of men" does not make sense. Further, various feminisms might give different answers. To give an example: whether militarism (war and peace) is seen as a fundamental "women's interest" (see Beckwith, Chapter 2 of this volume) will be answered differently by liberal and radical feminists. This leads to an outline in the sixth section about possible approaches to the study of women's representation, none of which requires an *a priori* definition of women's interests. Rather, we pose empirical questions. From a social movement research perspective, we ask: *How* have various actors defined what women's interests are, and *when* and on *which issues* has it been possible to form broad alliances among a diversity of women politicians, women's organizations, and movements? Prior to the conclusion, the seventh section points to the fact that all political decision making, also on feminist policy issues, is the result of political bargaining with mixed motives.

REPRESENTING WOMEN: THE CONCEPT OF "SUBSTANTIVE REPRESENTATION"

With the global focus on increasing women's political representation, e.g., through the use of gender quotas and with the actual growing number of women in elected assemblies (Dahlerup 2006a; Krook 2009; Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2010), the subject of women politicians representing or not representing women voters has become more salient. In the public debate, the connection between number and policies is discussed, for instance in the debate over the scholarly contested, but publicly widespread, theory of a critical mass (Dahlerup 2006b; Beckwith 2007). But what are women politicians supposed to represent?

New concepts, such as "gender perspective," "gender sensitivity," and "gender mainstreaming," have found their way into national as well as international documents during the last decades, adding to or replacing older terms, such as "equality perspective," and "women's issues," and even older ones, such as "women and family matters."

There is, however, no general agreement about what concepts like "gender perspective" or "gender mainstreaming" imply in terms of policy goals and policy outcomes. Of course, such vague terms may be applied for strategic reasons—avoiding conflict over their exact meaning and even hiding more radical goals, like the concept of "reproductive health," which often hide radical demands (e.g., free access to abortion). However, such terms can, of course, also cover very limited ambitions. Today, a bureaucrat in a local, national, or international institution can safely talk about "gender perspective" or "gender mainstreaming" without being asked what that

implies, whereas labels like "women's interests" or "feminist goals" would lead to various objections.

In contemporary feminist research, the term women's "substantive representation" is used increasingly, and the number-policy connection is being discussed in terms of the relation between descriptive and substantive representation, terms hardly used a few years ago (see. e.g., Wängnerud 2000; Mackay 2001; Goetz and Hassim 2003; Lovenduski 2005; Dahlerup 2006b). The concept of substantive representation has no doubt opened up new perspectives for research. However, different evaluations of the effects of increases in women's representation, the effects of various quota systems, as well as disagreements in the evaluation of the performance and effectiveness of women politicians in the scientific literature derives often, Dahlerup and Freidenvall argue (2010), from lack of clear criteria for evaluation, including criteria for what constitutes "substantive representation of women"?

From the feminist movement critique is often made that women politicians are "token" women, "proxies," and primarily party loyalists—in general, *not sufficiently feminist* in their work in parliament or local assemblies. But as researchers we need to develop evaluation criteria independently of the feminist movements, even if we personally may share feminist goals. Let's take a critical example: Is a non-feminist, right-wing woman politician who opposes free abortion because she, like many of her voters, believes that abortion undermines the traditional family (which is supposed to protect women and children) engaged in "substantive representation" of women? In a way she is, if she is representing her conservative constituents, but the answer totally depends on how we define women's interests and thus what constitutes women's substantive representation.

Stretching Hanna Pitkin

In the following we can see some nominal definitions of what women's substantive representation is.

> ...women's substantive representation (the promotion of women's interests). (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008: 394)
>
> ...attention to women's policy concerns (women's substantive representation). (Celis et al. 2008: 99)
>
> While descriptive representation functions somewhat by default (because there are women in parliament, women are therefore said to be represented), substantive representation requires consciousness and deliberate actions: a woman MP must speak and act in favor of the expectations, needs and interests of women. (Tremblay 2007: 283)

> In the conclusion of the book *Representing Women in Parliament* (Sawer et al. 2006), Jennifer Curtin defines the question of substantive representation as the contentious issue "of whether we can expect women, once elected, to act on behalf of women." (Curtin 2006: 244)

These basic definitions are, as one can see, not uniform, but they do point in the same direction. All of the definitions mentioned above evolved around being a representative of women, around the issue of "women's interests," or "on behalf of women." However, many problems remain unsolved by these definitions.

Studies that make use of the term "women's substantive representation" often take as their point of departure Hanna Pitkin's concept of "representing as acting for... in the interest of" (Pitkin 1967: 111–13, 209). This concept was developed in Pitkin's text as one of four different concepts of representation, the others being formalistic, symbolic, and descriptive representation. Pitkin, however, does not use the exact term "substantive representation," even if she does talk about "substantive acting for others" (115). She wanted to identify conceptually "[t]he view of representation centered on the activity of representing, the role of a representative..." (112).

It has been argued that Hanna Pitkin never explained how these four different views of representation fit together (Dovi 2006). Consequently, the focus on the relation between descriptive and substantive representation, so central to the study of gender and politics today, is in fact, neither in the exact term, nor in the focus on the relationship, a perspective of Hanna Pitkin's.

Further, Pitkin's main interest is the relation between the represented and the representatives in political assemblies, not policy outcomes as such. Attaching the discussion of women's substantive representation to Pitkin's purely conceptual analysis is an example of concept stretching. However, whether or not based on Hanna Pitkin, exploring the connection between the *who*, the *what*, the *how*, and the *where* of representation is an important theoretical and empirical task (Diaz 2005; Galligan 2007; Dahlerup 2011).

THE *WHO*, THE *WHAT*, THE *HOW*, AND THE *WHERE* OF REPRESENTATION

In an attempt at "gendering" Pitkin's categories, Yvonne Galligan defines three distinct but interrelated dimensions: *who* represents, *what* is represented, and *how* it is represented, the latter implying the political structures (Galligan 2007: 557). It was, among others, the feminist movements and the black movements that vehemently argued for the importance of adding the

who to the liberal notion of democracy, criticizing its limited focus on the *how*, i.e., the procedures of democracy. Even newer theories of democracy, such as deliberation theories, have to be reminded of the importance of who participates (Phillips 1995; Dahlerup 2011). In the literature on substantive representation, the importance of the *what* is further stressed, i.e., the substance or content of representation, the actual policies and policy outcomes. One may add a further dimension to Galligan's list, the question of *where* such representation takes place, thereby widening the scope to include forms of representation outside the formal political institutions, even non-elected representation (Saward 2010). In Part II of this book, all four dimensions of representation will be discussed.

From recent empirical studies the following three approaches reveal a substantial expansion of the scope of investigations into the substantive representation of women: from the relation between voters and their representatives (a), to studies of legislative processes and policy outcomes (b), to a very broad study of actors, sites, goals and means (c), all under the heading of the substantive representation of women, the case of representing women.

The Classic Focus on the Relation Between Voters and Representatives: Adding the *Who* to the *How*

This is the classic narrow understanding as found in Pitkin's work. Under this approach, the themes are *mandates* (When do women parliamentarians see themselves as representatives of women?); *accountability* (Do the voters expect female and perhaps even male politicians to be accountable to women and women's issues?); *issue congruence* among voters and representatives; and *the legislative autonomy* of women politicians under various party and quota systems (Wängnerud 2000; Diaz 2005; Rai et al. 2006; Childs and Krook 2009; Threlfall et al. 2012; Zetterberg 2009). Jane Mansbridge's influential article "Rethinking Representation" (2003) also has the voters-representative relation as its focus.[1]

1. Of her four forms of representation—"promissory," "anticipatory," "gyroscopic," and "surrogate"—Jane Mansbridge, and others after her, place responsibility for gender along with race, sexual preferences, disability, etc., under the fourth category, surrogate representation, i.e., a situation in which the representative feels responsible to surrogate constituents in other districts. However, for party-dominated political systems using the proportional representation electoral system (PR), the category "surrogate representation" seems less relevant, since most representatives do work across district lines in representing the political ideas of their party in parliament, not to the same extent as in plurality/majoritarian electoral systems, limiting their work as representatives to the electoral district where they were elected.

A Wider Perspective That Includes Policy Outcomes: Adding the *What*

> In our view, much of the existing literature conflates two distinct aspects of substantive representation: the process of acting for women and the fact of changing policy outcomes.
> (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008: 395)

Under this broader perspective, the policy formation process and the policy outcome are added to the voter-representative perspective, thus adding the *what* to the *who* and the *how*. At the center are questions of institutional barriers to and opportunities for women in their tasks as representatives. In their study of the effect of quotas on women's substantive representation with empirical data from Argentina, the first Latin American country to introduce electoral gender quotas by law, Franceschet and Piscopo (2008) "disaggregate" substantive representation into, first, the study of the processes of agenda building—whether and when female legislators advance women's interests and issues, to use Karen Beckwith's concepts—and, second, the outcome—how and why female legislators succeed or fail in advancing women's issues. In the Argentine case, women politicians mostly succeeded in representing women in the first sense; however, they failed, the authors argue, in the second sense, that of actually influencing legislation (2008). In the growing research field on the effects of electoral gender quotas, this broader definition of substantive representation is common, and attention is directed toward the effects of various institutional arrangements, different electoral systems and different quota systems on policy outcomes (Goetz and Hassim 2003; Diaz 2005; Sawer *et al.* 2006; Temblay 2007; Childs 2008; Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2010).

Anne Marie Goetz and Shireen Hassim are critical of the distinction between descriptive and substantive (or strategic) representation, since it may overstate the role of political agency and downplay the impact of the political institutions, encouraging, they say, a focus on the failures of female politicians (2003: 5). This is an important point, and today most researchers in the field do take up studies of the importance of the institutional context. It seems crucial to shift the focus from women politicians per se to the institutional and discursive constraints—as well as the opportunities—under which they work. These aspects of political opportunity structure are considered in Chapters 9, 10, and 11 (by Swers, Reingold and Haynie, and Escobar-Lemmon et al.) in this volume.

An Ever Broader Definition, Including Extra-Parliamentary Activities (NGOs): Adding the *Where*

Celis et al. suggest a shift in the terms of the debate away from the traditional questions of "Do women represent women?" or "Do women in politics make a

difference?" to questions such as "Who claims to act for women?" and "Where, why, and how does substantive representation of women (SRW) occur?" (Celis et al. 2008: 99). Following Michael Saward (2010), Celis et al. argue that representation takes place everywhere in society, not only in political assemblies. In this way, studying women's substantive representation involves studying "a wide range of actors, sites, goal, and means" (2008: 99). Such aspects of representation are studied in Chapter 6 (by Hoekstra et al.) and Chapter 8 (by Kang) in this volume.

This last perspective adds the *where* to the *who*, the *what*, and the *how*. To look at who claims to act for women, inside or outside the formal political assemblies, is a very interesting perspective, which involves studying, among other themes, the acts and influence of national and transnational women's organizations and agencies. We are back to studying women's diverse organizations, feminist as well as non-feminist women's groupings, trade unions working on behalf of their women members, feminist bureaucrats, etc., etc. Naming this much broader perspective a study of women's substantive representation is no doubt an obvious example of concept stretching. Yet, who acts for women, or who says that they act for women are interesting questions per se. It might, however, be more appropriate to continue studying women's movements from a social movement research perspective and develop other, special tools for the study of women politicians working within political institutions characterized by different degrees of male dominance (Dahlerup and Leyenaar 2013). However, we still have not solved the fundamental problem of what it is that should be represented in various settings: What is "women's interest"?

"WOMEN'S INTEREST" EMBEDDED IN FEMINIST THEORY

We will now return to the question of defining *substantive representation* of women and *women's interests*. First, some formal problems of definition should be raised. Can we talk about varying degrees of substantive representation? Can "substantive representation" be defined in gender neutral terms—"the substantive representation of men"? Why must this last question probably be answered in the negative?

Substantive representation is sometimes defined dichotomously as something that is either achieved or not achieved, as when a researcher is analyzing "the parliamentary practices affecting the likelihood of women's substantive representation" (Zetterberg 2009: 85). Other researchers use a language or an approach that explicitly or implicitly indicates a scale of more or less substantive representation, as when concepts like "enhanced" or "improved" substantive representation are used (Bauer 2008: 365; Franceschet and Piscopo

2008: 421). Further, are "women's interests" per definition *common* interests, shared by all women?

Second, and most important, even Karen Beckwith's excellent distinction between the more fundamental women's interests and issues and preferences (see Chapter 2 of this volume) leaves some questions unanswered. Apart from universal claims of autonomy and self-determination, on what ground are some problems defined as fundamental interests of women, while others are not? At the beginning of this chapter, I mentioned the example of the military, war and conflicts, dimensions of society which by radical feminists are seen as an integrated part of patriarchy, while liberal feminism may fight for equality for women in the military.

Today, the Marxian concept of objective interests is in general dismissed, partly because it seems to imply that diverging opinions are just expressions of "false consciousness." However, a definition of "women's interests" has to be based on a structural understanding of the causes of the subjection of women and gender inequality. This, however, implies that there will be only a limited and partial common understanding of women's interests, even within feminism.

Consequently, I will argue that a theoretical definition of women's interests has to be derived from and embedded in feminist theory about the structural foundations of male dominance and patriarchal society at large. Such concepts are born out of feminist scholarship dealing with how to change male dominance, and some common grounds can be found. This, however, implies that a term like the "substantive representation of men," in contrast to "women's substantive representation," is meaningless. The concept "substantive representation of women," in my opinion, only makes sense when embedded in feminist theory about changing male dominance.

In an original attempt to identify some common interests of women, Anna Jónasdóttir points out that the term "interest" comes from the Latin *inter esse*, meaning "to be among" (1991: 156). Women across the political spectrum first and foremost have a common interest in being part of political assemblies, being part of the deliberations (see also Phillips 1995). In contrast, based on her distinction between "actual" and "principal" women's interests, Beatrice Halsaa argues that it should be possible to define common principal interests for women in relation to motherhood and labor, work that is performed only by women (1987: 52). This argument has its parallel in Anne Phillips's statement that even if some women do not have children, pregnancy is not a gender-neutral event (Phillips 1995: 68). All such definitions are highly contested and constantly discussed, as is the genesis of women's oppression in general. Depending on our understanding of what representation implies, it may, however, not be necessary to have solved these fundamental theoretical questions in order to study women's representation.

REPRESENTATION SEEN AS A PROCESS

The subject of women's representation touches upon central themes in representation theory and in feminist theory.[2] In the following, our understanding of representation is discussed in its relevance to the study of women's substantive representation.

Diaz asks if we should, in the discussion, see women's representation in terms of individual rights (opening access for individual women), in terms of group rights, or as general representation (2005: 16)? The answer is related to the debate over our understanding of representation. Do we see representation, not as an act of giving voice to fixed and well-defined interests or identities, but as a demand to be included in a dynamic process and interaction between the represented and the representatives?

Iris Marion Young's theory is useful in this discussion, when she argues against viewing the notion of inclusiveness of women or minorities as a kind of interest representation. Rather, her model "emphasizes the ideals of inclusion, political equality, reasonableness, and publicity" (2000: 17). According to Young, the arguments against such inclusiveness, for instance through the use of quotas for women and for other groups, derive from a misunderstanding of the nature of representation more generally. Representation is not about a relation of substitution or identification, but a dynamic, "differentiated relationship" among political actors (2000: 123).

The idea of a dynamic concept of representation also responds to the concern over "essentialism" in the meaning of biologism or universalism. It opens up a discussion of women, not as a fixed, but as a historically and socially or culturally changing, category. Such a dynamic concept of representation points to empirical analyses of when, where, around which issues, and how women are mobilized on account of gender.

In the literature on women's substantive representation, there seems to be a growing agreement to disassociate this field of research from any notion of a fixed, static ("essentialist") notion of women and women's interests.[3] However, this point of departure gives rise to new questions: which feminism and for which women is representation sought in order to call it "substantive representation" of women?

2. While this chapter is written within the framework of women's representation in liberal democracies, many of the discussions here are also relevant for semi-democratic and even those non-democratic political systems that have parliamentary assemblies based on elections.

3. I confine the term "essentialism" to biological arguments. While biological essentialism is counter-productive in feminist research, gender categorization is a necessary research tool and should not be labeled "essentialist."

Which Feminism?

Contrary to Judith Butler's statement, mentioned at the start of this chapter, the feminist movements have always been very well aware of the many disagreements among women and between various women's organizations, even between different feminist circles. In a minimalistic definition, covering all feminisms, feminism is an ideology, which has as its basic goal to fight against male dominance, and against the discrimination and degradation of women and of the tasks predominantly performed by women (Cott 1987; Dahlerup 2013a). Feminism is more easily defined by what one is against than by a common goal. In general, I argue, that there is no common feminist utopia, only partial feminist utopias, and, consequently, the question of what constitutes good substantive representation of women can ultimately be answered differently with reference to the different goals of liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism, post-structuralist feminism, post-colonial feminism, queer feminism, etc. Consequently, we may have to give up trying to find a common understanding of what constitutes "women's interests," outside abstract, theoretical understandings of women's oppression and male dominance. Ultimately, the transformative potential of increased women's representation will have to be judged in relation to the different and perhaps contrasting goals of various feminisms, or even broader goals including non-feminist or "right-wing feminist" claims.

Which Women?

An important criterion of success for the efforts to change women's historical under-representation is whether increasing the number of women in political institutions leads to the representation of a diversity of women and that different voices of women are being heard (Celis 2006; The FEMCIT Project). The present discussion of intersectionality is highly relevant to any discussion about improving women's representation. Which women get represented?

We may speak about *intersectionalizing representation*. This implies that multiple or integrated structures of disfavoring—and of favoring—must be considered in the discussion about women's representation. Do electoral gender quotas tend to favor representation of majority women? Are minority women even less represented than men from minority groups (not always the case, for instance not in Scandinavia)? How do various minority women's groups define their ideal representation (Freidenvall and Dahlerup 2011, see www.femcit.org)? On this topic, see Chapter 3 (by Hancock) and Chapter 7 (by Htun) in this volume.

There are reasons to warn against double standards: representing diversity is a problem for the representation of men as well as of women, and should

not just be discussed as a problem concerning only women's representation. Further, women's under-representation and even to a large extent conflicts among women are to be interpreted within the context of women's historical exclusion from political power.

The many problems described above concerning defining women's interests and the substantive representation of women do not imply that we should not engage in empirical investigations about women's substantive representation. But it requires that we as researchers are open about our approach and our criteria of evaluation.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ABOUT REPRESENTING WOMEN

Compared to research on women's descriptive representation, research on substantive representation, according to Lena Wängnerud, is "less mature" (2009: 52). Franceschet and Piscopo also focus on the absence of common operationalizations that would make comparative research possible (2008: 495). Dahlerup and Freidenvall make the claim that differences in research results on the effect of women in politics often derive not just from different cases or historical periods, but also from the use of disparate criteria of evaluation (2010: 407; see also Dahlerup and Leyenaar 2013: 8).

Having identified various problems related to the use of the concepts of women's interests or "substantive representation of women," I will now turn to a discussion of possible approaches and strategies in empirical research on women in politics, none of which requires an *a priori* all-encompassing definition of women's interests—that is turned into an empirical question.

Using Certain Indicators

A relevant research strategy is to identify some key indicators of women's position and gender (in)equality, known from the debate, and then go on to test them using a comparative research strategy—looking for differences between countries, between municipalities, possibly at several points in time, all in relation to different levels of women's representation.

In this way the researcher avoids getting involved in the theoretically complex attempt to define women's interests. Instead, a number of key dimensions, *a priori* indicators, are selected for empirical study, for instance, violence against women, marriage laws, child care, income and pay equity, pensions, parental leave, or equality laws. The research interest could be the processes of agenda setting, actual legislation and regulations, or outcomes in the form of changes in women's and men's actual positions. The increasing number of global gender indexes rests on the use of such outcome indicators: Gender-Related

Development Index (UNDP), Gender Index (OECD), and Global Gender Gap (World Economic Forum).

In their ambitious project, Mala Htun and S. Laurel Weldon want to explore when and why governments promote women's rights through a comparative analysis of the experiences of 70 countries between 1975 and 2005 (see framework article 2010). Many more studies of this kind are needed.

Focus on the Claims of Women's Organizations

Indeed, women's organizations used to be the main source of any discourse on women's interests and substantive representation of women. Women's organizations are here understood as organizations with predominantly women as members and leaders. Not all women's organizations are feminist, and not all declared feminist organizations have only women as members. Within the group of women's organizations, feminist organizations or movements are distinguished by their explicit feminist ideology (for definition of the core of feminism, see above).

What is interesting to study empirically is how, when, and on what issues women's organizations—such as housewives' organizations, women's sections within political parties, or associations of women university teachers, to mention just a few—have acted together with declared feminist organizations for common aims.

Thus, in contrast to Judith Butler's ontological approach, my recommendation for research on women's substantive representation is to approach the issue by empirical research. Which issues have mobilized the broadest coalitions of women's organizations to act together? When have we seen alliances of women from ideologically different parties, classes, and ethnic background, and when did they succeed? When have men as feminist actors joined in? In sum, instead of trying to define what women's interests are *a priori*, this approach points to empirical studies of historical coalition formations among women's organizations and groups.

From research in the area we know that some of the *broadest alliances* of women in the Western world have been established around the issues of women's suffrage and later changing women's historical under-representation, women's education, support for single mothers, combating violence against women, and in more secular countries also around women's reproductive health. Much more research is needed following this approach.

Studying Changing Positions, Attitudes of and Actions by Women Politicians

This is an expanding research field within the overall theme of gender and politics. With the increasing number of women in elected assemblies,

internationally, nationally, and locally, it is highly relevant to study the positions, attitudes and actions of women politicians (over time, across countries, across municipalities). Two sub-themes will be mentioned in the following.

The Position of Women Politicians

In many countries around the world today, we see a significant increase in the number and share of women in leadership positions in government and within elected assemblies, even if politics is still heavily dominated by men. At the end of 2013, 21% of the world's parliamentarians were women (www.ipu.org); only around ten women were serving as prime ministers and less than ten women as presidents (www.guide2womenleaders.com). A prerequisite for women's ability to make policy change, if they so wish, is a stronger position within the hierarchies of political parties, parliaments, and other important political institutions. We see a new tendency that women are represented and function as parliamentary committee chairs and hold government portfolios in all types of issue areas, not as previously restricted to social and educational affairs. In general, labeling social and educational portfolios "soft," which even feminist researchers tend to do, seems to be a result, not of any characteristics of the actual policy areas (the social and educational areas do have some of the largest budgets), but a tautological way of reasoning based on the fact that many women politicians are found working in these policy areas, based on their previous professions and political interests (Dahlerup and Leyenaar 2013).

Attitudes and Actions

Studies from all corners of the world show that it is predominantly female politicians, sometimes together with a few male colleagues, who have placed issues like child care provisions, violence against women, equal pay, gender equality legislation, and women's under-representation on the political agenda, and have tried to push them through their own party groups and the legislative process at large, though not always with success. In strong party systems, it is, however, seldom seen that women politicians across party cleavages act together as one block against male politicians. Rather they will try to persuade male colleagues in each party fraction. Further, attitude surveys among politicians have also demonstrated that female politicians do not constitute one unified group, but that within each party, on the other hand, women tend to be somewhat more interested in social affairs and gender equality issues than their male colleagues, although a generational divide seems to be emerging. The picture is highly context dependent. To give an

example: in the Scandinavian countries, differences in attitudes and behavior between women and men members of parliament seem to be diminishing, while women politicians from the Global South, with South Africa as the outstanding example, today tend to speak more openly about women politicians working together for women's interests and "sisterhood." Dahlerup and Leyenaar ask (2013) to what extent such variations are linked to the differences between the *incremental track change* in women's political representation in old democracies versus the *fast track change* experienced especially in many post-conflict countries, not least by their use of electoral gender quotas.[4]

GENDER POLICIES ARE ALSO THE RESULT OF POLITICAL BARGAINING AND MIXED MOTIVES

Tokenism, "proxy women," "being too dependent on their political party or political leader"—these are among the accusations that women politicians meet, not least from the feminist movement from all over the world (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2010). The criteria that such evaluations are based on, however, are not always explicit. To give an example: some researchers find that the female majority in the Rwandan parliament, the first in the world, has been a failure, while others point to the new land reforms and laws against violence against women. In Sweden, with a parliament of 45% women, the evaluation of the effect of having an almost gender balanced parliament differs considerably, in the public as well as among researchers.

Three different sources of this widespread discontent with women politicians can be identified. First, I would argue, that research in this field, including my own, has sometimes followed the judgments of the feminist movements too closely. All throughout history, the feminist movements have been critical of women politicians. One may argue that criticism of legislators and legislation is a normal task of any social movement or lobby group. Nevertheless, based on an expectation of common interests, there has often been a strong sense of 'betrayal' hanging in the air between women politicians and feminist movements.

Second, women politicians are being met with contradictory expectations. They are accused by feminist movements of being too dependent on their parties and not sufficiently supportive of feminist demands. However, when they seek to create cross-party alliances on women's issues, they often experience

4. In relation to Implication 2.1 in Chapter 1, it is important to avoid what has been called "the difference fallacy" (Dahlerup 2006a). A lack of difference between male and female politicians in terms of attitudes and parliamentary actions may derive from the fact that the large number of women politicians have successfully influenced the political agenda and the attitudes on women's issues among male colleagues and party leaderships.

criticism from the party leadership for betraying the party line. In strong party systems, it is a victory when an issue, perhaps initiated as a "women's issue," is transformed into a party issue, supported by men as well as women. To document this kind of informal women's network, interviews and policy tracing are needed—a time-consuming research strategy.

Third, because of the lack of a common understanding of women's interests and women's issues, women politicians who support the demands of some women's groups will expose themselves to criticism by other women's groups, as laid out in Proposition 2 in Chapter 1. In the Scandinavian countries, the right-wing women's organizations attack left-wing and Social Democratic women's organizations for trying to monopolize feminism. Yet, in spite of these controversies, from time to time throughout Scandinavian history, grand coalitions of 'right wing feminism' and 'left wing feminism' have been formed, especially on the issues of changing women's under-representation, improving the position of single mothers, equal pay, and combating violence against women. Women's groups tend to be successful when they have cooperated across all cleavages in grand coalition (Dahlerup 2013b; Freidenvall 2013).

In a remarkable new discourse, xenophobic parties now represented in many European parliaments, and also in Scandinavian parliaments, argue that gender equality is a Danish, Norwegian, Dutch, or Austrian value that immigrants are not capable of learning. It is an amazing discourse, since these parties used to vote against almost all gender equality legislation in the past. Now they try to use gender equality to stress their distinctions between "us" and "them." The basis of this new discourse is, one should notice, that gender equality *has already been achieved* by the "natives," while no further gender equality interventions are needed, except toward immigrant groups!

The institutional frames for women's representation and the possibility for gender equality policies to succeed are important research themes. Do the feminist movement and sometimes even feminist researchers tend to base their analyses of women's substantive representation on unrealistic or idealistic assumptions about the political process? Do we only accept "pure" feminist motives behind a piece of legislation, be it quotas, legislation on violence against women, or money for shelters? Otherwise, our judgment will be predominantly negative: "They only do this because of..."

But political life is a game of bargains, compromises, and mixed motives. That is the case in equality policies as well as environmental policies, educational policies, and in fact all other policy areas. I would like to see studies that compare the adoption of equality policy with the adoption of environmental policy during the same historical period. What are the similarities and differences between the adoption of these contested new policy areas? It is a general methodological problem that researchers tend to study policies issue by issue, perhaps *diachronically*, neglecting the fact that political decisions are

made *synchronically*: "If your party votes for my budget, we will vote for your quota law" (Dahlerup 2008; Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2010).

To sum up: there is an urgent need for developing a set of standard definitions and indicators that enable cross-country comparative research on the performance and effectiveness of women (and male) politicians in furthering gender equality policies (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008; Wängnerud 2009). In general, cross-national studies are fruitful in that they require uniform criteria.

CONCLUSION

"Women" is no doubt an ambiguous category, as Simone de Beauvoir stated. For women's organizations, and especially for the feminist movements, this fact has complicated their advocacy on behalf of women. But this fluidity constitutes a challenge for feminist research as well.

The concern in this chapter is not primarily with the lack of universal definitions of what women's interests, gender sensitivity, and other similar notions imply—concepts that the idea of substantive representation are usually based on. A theoretical definition of women's interests is a matter for Feminist Theory, since, it is argued in this chapter, such definitions have to be embedded in abstract theories of male dominance and gender inequality. This, however, should not prevent empirical research on women's descriptive and substantive representation. This chapter has discussed various approaches and research strategies in this field, for which an *a priori* definition of women's interests is not necessary. What is needed are clearly stated criteria of evaluation, which is not always the case today. Interesting research themes for empirical studies of women's political representation and of the relation between elected women and women citizens are studies of how concepts of women's interests and women's issues have been used and defined by various actors and movements at various points in history, on what grounds mobilization has taken place, and when and on what issues larger coalitions of women's organizations have been formed in order to change policies and the structure of political decision making, and when they have been successful.

The use of the concept of "identity" in this regard, in my opinion, constitutes a major problem. The present trend of speaking of social movements in terms of "identity movements" is unfortunate, since it downplays the political aspect of these movements—their attempt to mobilize against discrimination and inequality. Should we similarly refer to the working class movement as an "identity movement"? Of course not. From a social movement perspective, common ideology and solidarity within a group—be it workers, blacks, women, immigrants, or LGBT persons—is clearly a result of organizational effort, not something instinctive or inherent (Dahlerup 2011, 2013a).

Changing women's historical under-representation is one of the political issues, which has gathered the largest coalition of diverse women's organizations. Research from many countries has shown that transforming male dominant political institutions into open and inclusive ones is a widely shared common goal. As during the suffrage movement, today we are seeing large national and international coalitions formed behind the claim for gender balanced political institutions—partly because such joint actions against male dominance in politics do not require any common agreement as to what this increased political influence should be used for.