Introduction

To understand how and why political representation is so central to feminist politics we first discuss traditional theories of representation. We follow this discussion with a consideration of how gender and politics scholars (most of whom would identify themselves as feminist) have used the term, paying particular attention to continuing debates and controversies. We then briefly summarise the state of scholarship on women's political representation before turning our attention to women's substantive representation – the dimension of representation that has been the focus of attention, over the last decade or so. Eight questions that are central to the contemporary research agenda on substantive representation are identified and then discussed in turn.

We contend that the very notion of *re*presentation tells us that the represented is not present Prevailing conceptual definitions in any period are shaped by its advocates who are themselves formed by their political context and priorities. Thus the meaning of the term political representation is both contingent and contested, a complex combination of elements that is ill-suited to simple definition or application. The concept has a lengthy pedigree among theorists and practitioners of politics. It became a significant focus of debate in arguments about diversity and identity politics in the late 1980s and 1990s. This followed a couple of decades in which much more was made of participatory democracy (Urbinati and Warren 2008, 393). Traditional political theory makes clear that political representation is paradoxical:

For advocates of democracy the transition from the ideal of the Athenian city state assemblies to large and populous nations created a problem of democratic participation (Dahl 1989). Above a certain size and territory, there was little possibility that all citizens could participate in their self-government. Political representation solves this problem through its practice of delegating or entrusting the advocacy of citizen interests to a smaller number of individuals who gather in assemblies and make decisions. Most theorists of political representation try to identify its

component elements and to specify its core characteristics. They focus on the activities of elected representatives. There are long standing controversies about the practice of representation, notably over whether elected representatives are delegates of their constituents or their trustees.

The process of understanding the components of political representation led inevitably to an industry of taxonomy construction (Birch, 1971, McLean, 1991, Rao 1998, Mansbridge 2003). The most influential was Hanna Pitkin's in *The Concept of Representation* published in 1967. Her four types of representation are: (1) authorised, where a representative is legally empowered to act for another; (2) descriptive representation, where the representative stands for a group by virtue of sharing similar characteristics such as race, sex, ethnicity, or residence; (3) symbolic representation, where a leader stands for national ideas; and (4) substantive representation, where the representative seeks to advance a group's policy preferences and interests. Pitkin finds that each has ambiguity and complexity and hence must be accompanied by caveats. Most notable in light of subsequent feminist scholarship is Pitkin's dismissal of descriptive representation. She rejects its key assumption of a link between characteristics and action and believes that a focus on descriptive representation leads to a focus on the characteristics at the expense of attention to the action of representatives. This is of course a logical possibility but most observers of political representation are all too aware of possible discrepancies between the characteristics of representatives and their actions.

In common with most theorists of her day Pitkin did not take up issues of gender. Until fairly recently the assumed political actors, both represented and representative, were implicitly male (Pateman 1988). Only with the emergence of gender and politics scholarship toward the end of the 20th century were issues of women's representation addressed by political theorists and political scientists. Those who did so were mostly feminists. The subsequent feminist study of political representation has both theoretical and empirical strands. In terms of theory, two books dominate this research: Hanna Pitkin's which was not explicitly gendered and Anne Phillip's *The Politics of Presence* published in 1995 which was. The work of these two influential scholars marks a critical shift in the theorisation of political representation in the academy. Arguably after Pitkin no one regarded descriptive representation as important, whilst after Phillips no one regarded it as unimportant. A considerable scholarship grew around Phillip's idea of a politics of presence (Young 2000; Mansbridge 1999) whereby political deliberation is said to require the participation of key groups if democratically representative decisions are to be made.

Feminist development of concepts of representation

The relative importance, indeed the practical applications and interactions of two of Pitkin'sconcepts of substantive and descriptive have come under close feminist scrutiny. There is relatively little feminist scholarship, theoretical or empirical, on authorised representation. Conceptual, and to a lesser extent, empirical research on symbolic representation is also somewhat limited. For Pitkin (1967), symbols are often arbitrary with no resemblance to the represented. Assessing the adequacy of symbolic representation relies on whether the representative is believed in, a criterion Pitkin found wanting. For feminists the notion that women are symbolically represented when they believe they are, even if all the representatives are men, is intuitively unsatisfactory (Childs 2007, 78; see also Meier and Lombardo (2010, 7). As Phillips writes, the presence of the formerly excluded signals their political equality (1995, 40, 45.)

Empirical studies of women's symbolic representation usually take one of three forms. First, and most common, are studies that conceive of symbolic representation in terms of the media representation of women politicians. These examine the amount of coverage women politicians receive relative to men, the dominance of stereotypical representations, and sex specific narratives that frame women politicians, for example the 'first woman' or 'newcomer' frames (Childs 2008). Second, are studies that investigate the role model effect of women politicians. These empirical studies to date offer mixed findings both for women's psychological engagement – levels of political interest, attention, efficacy – and political activism – joining a party, campaigning etc (Campbell and Wolbrecht, 2006). Recent research has found that the presence of high profile and viable women politicians positively affects younger women's expectations that they will participate in politics, not least through girls' enhanced discussion of politics, and to increase discussion of politics amongst women of all ages (Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006; Wolbrecht and Campbell 2007). Yet other studies find no association. Zetterberg's (2008) research on Latin America, for example, finds little relationship between sex quotas and women's levels of political interest, trust in politicians or political parties, and perceptions of political knowledge. It appears, then, that the relationship between symbolic and descriptive representation (the relationship between the presence of women in politics and women at the mass level) is more complicated than feminists may have wished. Finally, the least developed work on symbolic representation is research that subjects political symbols to gendered analysis and considers women as political symbols. Calling for a 'discursive turn', Meier and Lombardo (2010) hold that symbols are not merely visual. Hence, scholars should examine the ways in which women and men are symbolically represented (in their terms, 'constructed' and 'ranked') through metaphors,

stereotypes, frames, and underlying norms and values in constitutions, laws, judicial decisions, treaties, administrative regulations and public policies, as well as in more traditional symbols such as national flags, images, public buildings, public spaces, and statutes.

Of the two dimensions of representation most extensively explored by feminists, the research agenda has gradually shifted from a focus on descriptive representation (counting the numbers of women present) to considerations of substantive representation and the relationship between the two. Descriptive representation was a central interest for gender and politics scholars so long as there was not very much of it to examine. But as the numbers of women in elected legislatures grew it became possible to ask other questions, not least about what women representatives did once they were present. For many feminists the claim that women's political presence will engender women's substantive representation, even if accompanied by qualifications and caveats, is appealing. They reason that gendered experiences will underpin women representatives' greater tendency to act for women. Over time empirical studies have become more sophisticated, reflecting a change in the central research question from 'when women make a difference' to 'how the substantive representation of women occurs' (Childs and Krook 2008).

In addition to developments in gender and politics research on substantive representation political theorists, both feminist and mainstream, began to talk about representation in terms of claims making. Representatives – who may or may not be elected– are regarded as making claims to know what constitutes the interests of those they seek to represent (Squires 2008, Saward 2006; Urbinati and Warren 2006). Feminist reactions to these and other constitutive theories of representation (Mansbridge 2003; Disch 2011; Urbinati 2006; Celis et al 2008) have been largely favourable, although debates and questions remain. For example, does 'claims-making' constitute substantive representation in and of itself? Is a representative who claims to act for women, really 'acting for' women? How might one evaluate between competing claims to act for women? (Celis 2008; Celis and Childs 2011; Severs 2010). Do such notions of representation, taken to the extreme, accord with Pitkin's concerns over fascist theories of representation – where 'the leader must force his followers to adjust themselves to what he does' (Pitkin 1967, 107)

Gender and politics scholarship is characterised not only by its dominant feminism but also its common concern to conceptualise representation in such a way that its practice can be systematically assessed. The extensive body of work highlights and attempts to correct the neglected interconnections among all of Pitkin's categories (Schwindt-Bayer and Mischler 2005), focuses on the relationships between substantive and descriptive representation (Lovenduski

et.al.2005, Bratton and Ray 2007), reformulates Pitkin's categories in the light of feminist theories of representation and the requirements for research on the USA (Dovi 2007), and proposes new categories to take into account the requirements of deliberative democracy (Mansbridge 2003). Arguably iterative, the tensions in the relationships between theoretical and empirical gender and politics research have been remarkably productive. And while to some extent feminist empirical and theoretical work on representation proceeds along separate paths, both strands are sites of considerable debate about the significance of descriptive representation and its connections to substantive representation and more recently of symbolic representation (Meier and Lombardo 2010). For example, if women are symbolically represented as marginal to politics, or lacking legitimacy or effectiveness (the 'woman-politician-pretender' juxtaposed to the 'male-politician-norm', then this may negatively affect both their chances of being present in our political institutions (descriptive representation), as well as their abilities to act for women (substantive representation) once there (Meier and Lombardo 2010). As Celis (2008, 71) writes, feminist scholars reject any clear-cut separation between, or hierarchy of, the various dimensions of representation. For her, 'good representation' refers to the making present of women, in at least one sense: formally, descriptively, symbolically or substantively (Celis 2008, 80).

In the remainder of this essay we consider the interplay and relative importance of substantive and descriptive representation. We draw on a set of linked questions developed by various scholars as they operationalized the concept of political representation for empirical research (Celis et al 2007, 2008, Lovenduski and Gaudagnini 2010, Dovi 2007, 2010). There are eight questions:

1. Why should women be represented?
2. Who are the representatives of women?
3. Which women are represented?
4. Where does the representation of women occur?
5. How is the substantive representation of women done?
6. When does the representation take place?
7. To whom are representatives accountable?
8. How effective is the (claimed) representation?

Why should women be represented?

There are three main arguments for why women should be representatives in our elected political institutions. The powerful justice argument is mobilised wherever women claim political representation and contends that it is simply unfair for men to dominate descriptive

representation, a claim that is especially telling in countries that purport to be democratic and, or modern. Pragmatic arguments stress the electoral advantage of increasing the numbers of women representatives, namely, that political parties will be perceived as more women friendly and, as a result, attract women's votes. Difference arguments are of two kinds. First, that women will bring a different style and approach to politics than men. Secondly, that women are a heterogeneous group who require equal descriptive representation if their diversity is to be reflected in decision making. Only the justice argument makes no claims about substantive representation. The pragmatic and difference arguments both imply that women's presence will improve their substantive representation.

Despite reservations about a researchable concept of women's interests and the complexities of constructing a 'women's' policy agenda (question 3 below), most feminist political scientists are attracted to the potential of descriptive representation to deliver at least a measure of substantive representation and make (highly qualified) arguments to support this belief. For example, the 'transformative' argument predicts that increasing the presence of women will change politics by improving the democratic functioning of legislatures (Phillips 1998). This approach assumes that women representatives will behave in a more democratic fashion and will pay more attention to political inequalities than men. The 'over-looked interests' argument is that 'male representatives are not always aware of how pubic policies affect female citizens'(Dovi 2007, 307-309). In a similar vein Jane Mansbridge (1999) argues that descriptive representation can be justified in four contexts: contexts of mistrust, uncrystallized, not fully articulated interests, historical political subordination and low de facto legitimacy. The implication of her first two arguments is that some kind of a link exists between substantive and descriptive representation. Since Phillips (1995) argued so effectively for a 'politics of presence', feminists have contended that a necessary condition of the representation of women's interests (however these might be defined) is the presence of women in our political institutions and other places where decisions are made. Phillips reasons that interests are realised in the course of deliberation and decision making as various options, implementation strategies and competing concerns are discussed. Only when present may women benefit from such realisation and insert their interests. While the logic of Phillip's claim is inescapable it has proved more difficult to demonstrate that the representation of women's interests necessarily follows from the presence of women representatives in a particular institution, although a great deal of circumstantial evidence that this is the case has been assembled and presented. Laurel Weldon (2002, 1156) points out that the presence of individual women is insufficient to guarantee the substantive representation of women because 'individuals can rarely provide a complete account or analysis of the obstacles confronting the group without interacting with others from the group'.

Who are the representatives of women?

The short answer to this question is men. In most of the world's legislatures the overwhelming majority of elected representatives are men. The average percentage of women in lower Houses of Parliament, as of 2010, is a mere 19.3 percent. (http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm). In only one country – Rwanda – do women constitute more than half of the members, even though women constitute more than half of the world's population. Fewer than 25 countries worldwide meet the UN criterion that a minimum of 30 per cent women should be present in the legislature. [1] Moreover, women's descriptive representation is not universal. Women are absent from the legislatures of nine countries: Belize, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.

The overall global trend for women's descriptive representation in national parliaments is upwards, despite widely reported falls in post-communist countries, individual fluctuations within particular countries, and stagnation in others. But recent increases are neither large nor decisive. Over the last decade the global average has increased by just 6 percent. Table 1 shows the regional increases between 1997 and 2010, at best the increase is 9 percent over more than a decade and in the Pacific region there has been little change. Global and regional averages mask significant intra-regional differences. The top ten ranking countries, as of December 2010 are: Rwanda, 56.3%, Sweden, 46.4%, South Africa, 44.5%, Cuba 43.2%, Iceland, 42.9%, Netherlands 40.7%, Finland 40%, Norway, 39.6%, Belgium 39.3% and Mozambique 39.2%. [2]

Table 1 Women's Representation in National Parliaments, 1997 and 2010.

Region	Lower House, 1997	Lower House, 2010	% Increase
Nordic Countries	35.9%	42.1%	6
Europe – OSCE member including Nordic	14.3%	22.0%	6
Americas	13.5%	22.5%	8
Asia	9.7%	18.6%	9
Europe, excluding Nordic	12.3%	20.1%	8
Sub-Saharan Africa	10.8%	18.3%	7
Pacific	12.8%	13.2%	0
Arab States	3.7%	9.2%	5

Source: www.IPU.org, accessed July 29th 2010.

Analyses that focus on the total number of women in a particular legislature have been criticized for failing to acknowledge within-country differences (Kittilson 2006). Different political parties within the same country may well return different proportions of women representatives. In the

UK, for example, women's descriptive representation is asymmetric as the Labour party returns most of the women MPs.

What explains low numbers of women in politics? Various cultural, socio-economic and political factors and conditions have been identified in analysis of advanced western democracies .More egalitarian cultures, greater secularization and early women's enfranchisement are said to be positively correlated with higher numbers of women representatives (cultural factors). Other predictors are the level of women's participation in the public sphere, in the 'pipeline' professions from which politicians are recruited and a strong social democratic tradition (socio-economic factors). Finally, the presence of majoritarian electoral systems is thought to hinder, whereas proportional electoral systems, especially those with higher district magnitude, favour greater numbers of women (political factors). All of these explanations find some emprical support, but none appears to be either a necessary or sufficient condition of women's representation (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2010). The use of sex quotas, (see Essay #) is positively correlated with, but not a guarantee of, higher levels of women representation.

The geographic and temporal specificity of many explanatory factors has also been shown to be significant. Mona Lena Krook's (2010) analysis of women's descriptive representation in western democracies and in sub-Saharan Africa concludes that women's descriptive representation reflects different combinations of conditions, and that the effect of individual conditions may be mediated by or dependent upon the presence or absence of others. For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, higher levels of women's descriptive representation, are not affected by the type of electoral system, but is associated with: (1) the presence of quotas and post-conflict situations, or (2) women's high status and post-conflict situations, or (3) quotas, women's low status and high levels of development (Krook 2010, 902). Low levels of representation are associated with (1) no quotas and women's low status, or (2) women's high status and non-post-conflict societies, or (3) low levels of development and non-post-conflict societies (Krook 2010, 903; Lovenduski 2005).

Within countries political party organization, rules and ideology can variously determine the rules of the game including the legal, electoral, and party systems (Norris and Lovenduski 1995, Kenny 2009). In simple language, the numbers of women selected as legislative candidates will be determined by the interaction between the *supply* of applicants wishing to pursue a political career and the *demands* of selectors who choose candidates on the basis of their preferences and perceptions of abilities, qualifications and perceived electability (Norris and Lovenduski 1995). In the supply and demand model assessment of sex and gender differences indicates first, that women's resources will be fewer, smaller and different from men's, thereby reducing the number

of women in the supply pool for candidate selection Secondly, women may experience negative discrimination when they seek selection. Accordingly, the political marketplace is distorted and unlikely to produce an equilibrium solution (Krook 2009, 4).

While the requirements of descriptive representation are at least superficially straightforward in that only women can descriptively represent women, those of substantive representation are more complicated. Much feminist theory (Phillips 1995; Mansbridge 1999; Dovi 2000) suggests that women's substantive representation is much more likely to be undertaken by the (relatively few) women representatives present in legislatures. Two concepts are used to predict substantive representation, critical mass and critical acts. Critical mass is a term borrowed from physics by Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) to assess change in organisations. The term is usually understood to hold that, once women constitute a particular proportion of a parliament, politics will be transformed because a tipping point of some kind is reached (Studlar and MacAllister 2002). But this reading does not capture the subtleties of feminist treatment of the concept. Dahlerup's classic (and often misquoted) 1988 article argues that it is not critical mass or the numbers of women who are present, but critical acts that are important. Her insight shifts the focus of the argument from an emphasis on presence to scrutiny of what happens when women are present, to what else happens when the numbers of women change. It is an argument for the consideration of substantive representation that does not deny the significance of presence. Recent scholarship suggests that critical actors may, even when the numbers are small, undertake critical acts for women (Dahlerup 1988; Childs and Krook 2006, 2008). What distinguishes a critical actor from other representatives is their relatively low threshold for action. They are motivated, possibly by their feminism, possibly by a looser less explicit gendered experience, to initiate the substantive representation of women (Childs and Krook 2006). This understanding does not rule out the possibility that individual male representatives might well have 'acted for' women in the past and may well do so today. But it does require feminist researchers to consider fully the contexts in which representation takes place. Representatives who 'act for' and/or claim to 'act for' women, are not limited to our elected legislatures. Representation takes place in a variety of other fora, either separate from, or in addition to, political ones (Celis et al 2008.) Future research should explore the interactions between these different kinds of representatives.

Which women are represented?

This complex question is closely related to the Who (2) and the What (4) questions. The central issues are both descriptive and substantive.   Here we ask 'what kind of women are our elected representatives?' and we acknowledge the contested nature of the concept of women's interests

(which we address in the next section). The case for descriptive representation weakens when we consider which women become elected representatives. They rarely share social backgrounds with women in the electorate, a pattern that also holds for men, but which is not often problematized. European women elected representatives are more likely to be highly educated, middle class, elite women (Mateo Diaz 2005). Yet, the politically salient differences among women are as substantial as those among men and include class, ethnicity, race, religion, age, group memberships, party affiliations, marital status, children at home, school, other dependents, employment status, right and left wing women, and feminist and anti feminist women.

Feminist scholars frequently capture difference by framing in terms of the concept of intersectionality (see Essay #) (Weldon 2006), according to which various bases of oppression interact in multiple forms of discrimination against women. Although women's heterogeneity, and how it might affect conceptions of representation, is quite well theorised (see Phillips 1995; Young 2002; Dovi 2007), there is relatively little data on the representation of the various social categories of women, and what there is tends to reflect the political culture of the country in which the data are collected. Political party differences have generally received the greatest attention. Thus, we have good information on the presence of women from different political parties in most countries; on race and ethnicity in the USA; on race and class in the UK; of caste in India; but relatively poor information on other aspects of difference. Difference itself can be politically sensitive, sometimes too sensitive to be officially recorded. In post-genocide Rwanda, for example, the election of a majority of women to the legislature is held to be an indication that tribal divisions are being healed, but it is illegal to ascribe tribal identity to anyone.

Demographic distortions in the mirror of representation have been used against claims for women's political presence. In the Anglo American democracies divisions of both race and class inform the counter argument that women's descriptive representation means effectively the presence only of white, middle class, elite women. Historically European socialist men opposed women's suffrage and women's movements for much the same reason (Lovenduski 1986). In India the movement for women's political representation was criticised for the failure of its middle class leaders to form alliances with lower caste women. Htun (2004) takes up this point when she argues that candidate quotas are the suitable solution for women's descriptive underrepresentation whilst reserved places are best for minority ethnic groups. Thus, when reserved places are used to promote women they risk division in minority communities. Indeed, during the Indian movement for women's political representation a prominent politician said the relevant bill was for 'balkati auraten' or short haired women, a reference to upper class urban feminists (Htun 2004, 448). In short, difference continues to be a huge problem for feminists who

deny the unitary category of 'women' as essentialist and aim to represent women's diversity in politics, a condition that has yet to be achieved by men. In summary, if different groups of women experience inequality differently they may well have different interests to be represented. Thus it is only when at least the salient differences among women are mirrored by their elected representatives that there is real purchase in the descriptive argument.

Shifting our attention from descriptive to substantive representation, we find charges that, in practice, substantive representation is merely the representation of elite women's interests. But the concept of 'women's interests has proved contentious for gender and politics scholars. Feminists have variously sought to identify women's objective and subjective interests (Sapiro 1988), rejected the concept in favour of need (Diamond and Hartsock 1988), triedto avoid the opposition of need and interest by favouring being present (Jonasdottir 1990), or preferred the term women's concerns (Cockburn 1996) or perspectives (Lovenduski 2005). As Celis (2005, 2008) helpfully notes, these terms capture the 'private distribution of labor', for example, women's roles in giving birth and caring for children (Sapiro 1998) and emphasize the role of the gendered division of productive labour (Diamond and Hartsock 1998), or refer to perspectives which derives from women's structural position in society (Lovenduski 2005, Phillips 1995, Young 2002). A recent four country comparison suggests drawing a distinction between 'women's issues' (the broad policy category such as the reconciliation of work and family life), and 'women's interests (the specific content given to this category by various actors). Whilst there was some agreement over what constitutes women's issues across the UK, Finland, Belgium and the US - equal pay and violence against women, for example - others were more country specific, such as women's access to sport in the US. Krook et al (forthcoming) concluded therefore that, in addition to the contested nature of women's interests, what constitutes women's issues varies over time and between different countries.

In empirical studies two main approaches to operationalizing women's interests are found (Celis 2008, 2005). In the first, women's interests are subjectively defined by the researcher as either those traditionally associated with women (such as child-caring and the family), or those with a 'feminist accent' (such as abortion or domestic violence). This approach suffers, according to Celis from a tendency to essentialize women, which is theoretically untenable and undermines feminist concerns about heterogeneity and intersectionality. It risks both ignoring differences between women at a particular place and time as well as failing to recognize that women's interests may vary significantly across spaces and time. The second approach looks to the

demands of the contemporary women's movement to identify women's interests (Celis 2008, 2005, McBride and Mazur 2010). This approach can be challenged on the grounds that it privileges women's movement, i.e., feminist, concerns. It also assumes that women's movements are free to articulate their demands. For these reasons Celis et al (2008, 2010) contend that we would do better to acknowledge that women's concerns are *a priori* undefined, context related, and subject to evolution. Another danger of the vexed problem of understanding women's interests is the temptation to conflate women's interests with feminists' understanding of women's interests (Schrieber 2008). Only more recently have gender and politics scholars begun to address explicitly the challenge posed by conservative and anti-feminist representatives who claim to act for women (Celis and Childs 2011).

The difficulties of establishing a non-essentialist set of women's concerns have not in practice prevented feminists from advocating specific policies for women. A feminist policy agenda can be constructed by reviewing research that proceeds from feminist definitions. This agenda includes equal pay and equal treatment at work, reproductive rights including abortion, child care and domestic labour, sexual freedom, violence against women, prostitution and trafficking, female genital mutilation and political representation.[3] The Research Network on Gender and the State (RNGS), an international network of feminist scholars researching state feminism and feminist policy in western democracies, analysed five policy areas: job training, prostitution, abortion, political representation, and the gendering of a major issues. The gendering of a key contemporary issue was included in recognition of the fact that women have interests in mainstream policies.[4] Franceshet and Piscopo's (2008) study of substantive representation in Argentina argues that promoting gender quotas, penalizing sexual harassment, combating violence against women are matters of women's interests. One reason for such common policy concerns across countries may be the transmission of collective 'women's issues' via international women's movements and feminist activists and international actors such as the UN. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, and the Beijing Platform for action (1995), stand out in this respect.[5] CEDAW addresses, inter alia, prostitution (Article 6), political representation, (Article 7), education (Article 10), employment (Article 11), women's health (Article 12), women's economic and social benefits (Article 13) and marriage and family life (Article 16). Beijing 1995 addressed, inter alia, women's poverty, education, health, violence against women, conflict, economic inequality, power sharing and politics, women's human rights and the rights of the girl child.[6] Another important qualification to presence effects is found in the interplay between party and sex. Many studies have found that party affiliation explains more than sex (Lovenduski and Norris 2005, Norris and Lovenduski 1995, Kittilson 2006, Norris 1986, Dodson

2006), particularly in highly visible, confrontational and partisan settings. Moreover, it is very often women members of left-leaning parties rather than women representatives from the rest of the political spectrum who make the most effort to raise women's issues and concerns.

Where does the Representation of women take place?

Representation occurs in institutions. Institutions, defined as rules and processes, shape debate and decision making not least by determining who is and is not a representative, and how, where, and when decisions are made. These institutions may or may not have been designed with either democracy or women in mind. Feminist institutionalist research has specifically explored the place of women and women's advocates in political institutions. The work considers the configurations of systemic (electoral and party systems), practical (formal and informal criteria for candidate selection and method of ballot composition) and normative institutions (norms of equality and representation) to establish whether they 'facilitate or hinder' women's descriptive representation' (Krook 2009, see also Kenny and MacKay2009) and if they affect women's substantive representation (McBride and Mazur 2010, Lovenduski and Guadagnini 2010, MacKay, Waylen, Franceschet and Piscopo 2008, FIIN; Lovenduski 2005; Dodson 2006; Wangnerud 2000) .

To date most studies emphasise the role of elected legislatures which often confirm decisions made elsewhere and not necessarily by electorally accountable officials. Appointed government and other public bodies, political parties, economic organisations such as trade unions, professional and employer organisations, firms, NGOs, social movements, the print, broadcasting and electronic media have been shown to play a part in political decision making and are arenas in which women have sought presence. Only a fraction of these positions are directly elected, many are appointed, some are self selected. A number of feminist scholars have attempted to research representation beyond legislatures and have looked at executives, agencies, parties and social organisations of various kinds (Annesley 2010, Breitenbach 1981, McBride and Mazur 2010, Karvonnen and Selle 1995, Bergqvist 1999). The composition of their corporate bodies, the committees that exercise decision making power over most aspects of political life were a huge concern for Nordic scholars and activists who identified gender gaps in representation and operated to implement various kinds of quotas policies in public appointments to correct such imbalances (Hernes and Vole 1980, Karvonnen and Selle 1995, Bergqvist 1999). Note that as we write in the summer of 2011 Germany and Belgium are legislating quotas for women on boards and commissions. The most sustained research on state appointments and agencies has

concentrated on the established democracies of the political west but there is a growing literature on other political systems (Weldon 2002, Waylen 2007, Goetz 2009).

The political system or country in which the debate takes place, the institutional sites (especially their proximity to power) on which it is conducted and the bases from which its participants operate all affect representation. In Western and Northern European democratic systems research finds a consistent relationship between citizenship type and the percentage of women in the lower house, a predictable effect of tendency for corporatist and quasi corporatist systems to have relatively high numbers of women in parliament, and a positive association of citizenship model, legislator presence and the tendency for women legislators to intervene in debates on selected women's issues (Krook, Lovenduski and Squires 2009; Lovenduski and Guadagnini 2010). Theories of public policy suggest that influence varies according to the policy sector under consideration, a finding that holds for women's advocacy. Access to the policy sub system is a crucial group resource. Research on the 'old' democracies indicates considerable variation in both institutionalisation and the effectiveness of the actors who are present (Lovenduski and Guadagnini 201; McBride and Mazur 2010).

Where policy systems are closed then women's advocates are especially dependent on interventions by legislators (Lovenduski and Guadagnini 2010). In terms of constitutional arrangements it is clear that important decisions are eventually, at least formally, decided in the legislature. Legislators are constrained by party discipline and party manifestos, institutions that historically are dominated by men and male concerns. In such systems women's movements and officials appointed to represent women may actually have more scope to represent women than elected legislators bound by party discipline. (Guadagnini 2007, Cowley and Childs 2003)

Even so, in party democracies the activism and effectiveness of women's advocates in political parties is one of the crucial determinants of the quality of their representatives (Kittilson 2006, Lovenduski 2005, Childs 2008.) Research on women's advocates in executives and governments is a relatively new subfield but there is scattered evidence that women's advocates at least attempt to intervene. Recent British examples include interventions in cabinet by Clare Short, Patricia Hewitt, Harriet Harman and Yvette Cooper all of whom are reported to have acted to raise women's issues (Annesley 2010, Childs 2008).

How is the substantive representation done?

What are the processes through which women's claims are formulated, refined and advanced? A central question is what happens when women's presence is achieved d. How, if at all, do

representatives claim for women? There are problems in researching this question. Beyond analyses of roll call voting, much of the process of representing an interest in our elected political institutions and other institutions may be hidden from view, a matter of 'behind the scenes' organising and influence, hence expensive and difficult to research in any systematic way. Given concerns about the limits of using roll call voting, in which party tends to explain more than sex, investigations of the attitudes, policy priorities and initiatives made by women legislators have become common. This work generally finds that women legislators are more likely to act for women than men (Ayata and Tutuncu 2001, Bratton and Haynie 1990, Wangnerud 2000, Swers 2002, 2005, Taylor–Robinson and Heath 2003) but that women may be marginalised into certain soft policy areas including women's committees. Hence, there is considerable recognition that women must change the institutions they enter (Heath, Schwindt-Bayer and Taylor-Robinson 2005). While it is impossible to disagree with such conclusions they place a huge, and additional, burden on women representatives (Lovenduski 2005)- downplaying the fact that any 'parliament has a strong regulating capacity, its own logic, a strong inertia, very little room for innovation, and many ways to socialise or assimilate 'dissidents' (Mateo Diaz 2005, 225).

Within decision making processes one of the most common techniques used by women's advocates is framing. Women's representatives put forward explicitly gendered ideas in attempts to frame or reframe a debate so that its discourse is gendered or regendered in line with women's interests. These gendered frames may be, but are not necessarily, feminist. Most issues have gender dimensions as they implicitly or explicitly reflect some notion of relations between women and men and masculinity and femininity. The strategy of framing exposes the biases of debates by drawing attention to their gendered content or offering a regendering of an already explicitly gendered frame. Women's representatives have become skilled at these processes which are central to their political repertoires. In addition, movement actors engage in and frequently initiate consultative relationships with political institutions that may establish consultative groups that include movement actors. Contribution to policy research by expert movement actors is one of several forms of lobbying and a major site of framing. It feeds into deliberation in terms of content and discourse hence is an attempt to gender subsequent debate (Skjeie 1993, Mazur 2001, MacBride and Mazur 2010, Outshoorn 2004, Sauer 2010, Stetson 2001).

Finally, women's advocates go into coalition with other actors, making alliances both within movements and between movements, civil society and the state. Feminist research which reveals policy cooperation between women's policy agencies and movement advocates located in different arena such as autonomous women's movements, the media, political parties, trade unions, legislatures, government and public administration. The literature includes discussions of

strategic partnerships between women's movements and women's policy machinery (Holli and Kantola 2005). A common metaphor is that of the triangle, capturing the idea of an alliance between movements, state and some other entity. . Although there is no agreement on the definition of the triangle its components or its strategic location, most include state actors, legislators and women's movement actors who are linked to each other through different organisations and political processes. (Halsaa 1999, Vargas and Wieringa 1998, Mazur 2002, Woodward 2003)

Thus, for the most part women's advocates utilise the standard operating procedures of the political system in which they are acting. Arguably they are operating through most of the known channels of influence and using the full range of techniques. But despite some evidence of institutional change (see below), they do so from a disadvantaged position in relation to established (usually masculine) actors.

When does the representation take place?

Although very little attention has been paid to this question to date, it deserves a place on the research agenda Political memoires and biographies often include accounts of the importance of time and timing in terms of both strategy and tactics, yet representation scholars rarely give time systematic attention, although some researchers advocate and employ research designs that arguably better captures the processes of substantive representation (Dodson 2006; Celis et al 2008). Political time is complex. We know, for example, that time is a resource for elected politicians and that women, on average, have less of it than men. This facet of time is most frequently addressed in respect of women's descriptive representation, as a supply side barrier to women's equal presence (Norris and Lovenduski 1995). In respect of substantive representation, two dimensions of timing look to be particularly important, and worthy of subsequent research: (1) *juxtaposition,* examples of which include connection to other issues, proximity to election years, the phases of the world and national economy, the public opinion cycle, and the timetable of the decision process; and (2) *sequence*, for example, whether an attempt to act on a particular issue is by or followed a victory or defeat for women's advocates, or if a claim is an obvious extension of a previously enacted policy. A classic example of juxtaposition is the insertion of a ban on sex discrimination in the US 1964 Civil Rights Act in which an amendment extending rights for women was added to the bill by southern Democrat Virginian congressman Judge Howard Smith who hoped (wrongly) that this would sufficiently increase opposition to the bill to prevent its enactment (Meehan 1985). Sequence is illustrated by the extension of the public sector duty, previously limited to racial minorities and disabled people, to promote sex equality

in the British Equal Rights Act of 2010 and the successive Equality and Anti Discrimination Directives of the European Union that extended the rights of women (and other groups) over a period of three decades.

To whom are the representatives accountable?

For Pitkin accountability is 'the holding to account of the representative for his actions' (1967, 11). Here we confront another contradiction of a representative democracy. On the one hand representatives must be able to act, on the other they must account for those actions. In short, accountability theory claims that genuine representation exists only where there are effective, transparent controls that make the representative responsible to the represented (Pitkin 1967, 57). Accountability theory may be used to falsify claims that even those who are not allowed to vote are virtually represented (for example, that pre-franchise women were represented by male heads of household).

In democracies, regular, 'fair and free' elections are a crucial form of accountability and the non-negotiable component of democracy. Yet the problem of how best to institutionalise accountability into a modern democratic political structure in which elections are crucial but do not yield detailed policy mandates remains. At the system level accountability is a function of the institution in which representatives act. So, where movement actors are in the legislature they are accountable to their electorate, their parties and their constituencies, where they are in trade unions to their members and co-workers, in parties to their fellow members, but also more indirectly to the electorate and to the interests that are the basis of party support. The accountability of a representative to women's movements is, however, not normally constitutionally specified and may not figure large in decision-making.

While particular elected representatives may be accountable to women's movements at the level of ideas, constitutions do not normally provide for direct accountability of elected or appointed representatives to women's movements, even where they may have been influential in getting women selected and elected, appointed to positions in the executive or getting agencies established and are often involved in the formal or informal nomination of leaders. There are exceptions. Some equality agencies are committees of movement representatives or included designated places for some movement representatives (Guadagnini and Dona 2007). Even so,

many women representatives feel an obligation to represent women (Mateo Diaz 2005; Childs 2004). When they intervene on issues that are women's movement priorities and make claims that are congruent with feminist and or women's movement demands representatives are trying to represent women by forwarding movement ideas to decision makers. But are they accountable to women even though crucial elements of accountability are missing? We think not.

.Accountability is a largely unexplored dimension of feminist representation research some of which can be read as a catalogue of justifications for demands for the accountability of state actors to women's movements. But that is not how democratic political systems are constructed. Accountability is normally provided for by imperfect formally democratic processes in which movement voices are absorbed into aggregating electoral politics that were not designed to take account of the interests of women. Women's movements aim to correct the resulting imbalances but their effectiveness is limited by the nature of the systems in which they operate (Lovenduski and Guadagnini 2010).There is very little feminist political representation theory that acknowledges this problem in real political systems. Mansbridge's (2003) discussion of is a rare exception but one which presupposes a system of loose party discipline hence not applicable to the cases of party government in which voters have little choice of candidate and legislators are subject to party discipline that are characteristic of European democracies or where legislator deliberation is not decisive. Even where there is provision for accountability of officials to women's movements, it is rarely direct. The provision for accountability in most political systems depends upon channels that predate demands for women's inclusion, thus adding to the layers of institutional insulation of male elites. Perhaps, as Dodson (2006, 22) argues, feminists have been (too) content to accept the actions of women representatives because, for the most part, they have been 'consistent with what feminist scholars believe is the appropriate direction policy should take'. Unfortunately, that is no longer, if it ever was, a sustainable position, particularly when conservative and anti-feminist women are present in political institutions.

How effective is the (claimed) women's representation?

'Good representation' requires that the represented are made present, As we write there is some agreement that women's representation is effective when they are sufficiently present in institutions and when attempts at substantive representation are made. Good representation exists along a continuum from 'non-representation – [to] - representation' (Celis 2008, 82). It is, however, difficult to specify much further. It cannot satisfactorily be argued that certain interests are women's interests *a priori*. And even if it could, we cannot yet tell how exactly increasing the

numbers of women affects their representation. Counting the number of women in a particular institution at a particular time establishes the level of women's descriptive representation and permits comparison over time and place.[7] Data on the sex of political representatives are readily available (www.ipu.org).Low numbers of women are a common basis for claims for minimum requirements or quotas of women's presence. Parity of women and men should be the standard. Any figure below that is arbitrary and risks the unintended consequence of creating a glass ceiling (Trimble and Arscott 2003). Accordingly the demands for 'greater representation' have changed to demands for 'parity' or sex 'balance' with provision for intersectionality.

While the measurement of descriptive representation is relatively straightforward, its relationship with substantive representation is more opaque. Numerous mediating factors, identified in a range of studies, are found to affect representatives' actions (see Dodson 2006). Often identified in the very same literature that finds some presence effects, they include the external political environment, institutional norms, the impact of party affiliation, ideology and cohesion, differences amongst women representatives, representatives' newness, institutional position, including front- and back-bench and government or opposition membership, committee appointment and leadership, women's caucus presence, the existence of a women's policy machinery and the vagaries of policy making.[8] The attitudes and behaviour of women and men may converge (Swers 2002, 10), as gender roles alter, or because women's presence within legislatures causes men to act for women (Reingold 2000, 50; Mateo Diaz 2005). Contemporary gender and politics scholarship also acknowledges the multiple sites and actors involved in women's substantive representation (see Weldon 2002) and argue that the substantive representation of women is likely to take place at different and interacting levels of political institutions and in a variety of political and other fora (Celis et al 2008. In sum, representatives are increasingly regarded as acting in complicated institutional settings and wider political contexts which must themselves be subject to analysis (Lovenduski 2005; *Politics and Gender* 2009).

Institutional analysis may also further qualify conclusions about the about the achievements of substantive representation. What looks like not very much substantive representation may, in fact, be quite considerable given the effort needed to achieve feminized change in a particular setting (Dodson 2006, 29, cf Childs 2008, 170).

For some scholars, substantive representation is confirmed when representatives *routinely* act for women, and bring women's perspectives to political debate, for others the inclusion of a *diversity* of women's interests is required (Trimble 1993, 1997, 2000 Celis 2008, 83). Yet others look to

notions of congruency between the represented and the representatives (Severs 2010). Recent work on representative claims (Squires 2008; Saward 2008) adds another layer of complication: any simple understanding of congruency between the interests of the represented and subsequent action by representatives appears incompatible with more creative, or anticipatory (Mansbridge 2003) understandings of representation. In this respect, Severs (2010) draws our attention once again to the possibility that one can 'feel' represented whilst not 'being represented' when she writes of the need to be able to 'differentiate between symbolic and policy responsiveness'. The legitimacy of certain claims to represent women may not also be as easily determined as the notion of an economy of claims suggests (Saward 2006; Dodson 2006). If some claims makers are advantaged over others, if the represented are not able to contest claims (Severs 2010; Disch 2011), if the system lacks sufficient institutionalized processes, or other means, of accountability (Urbinati and Warren 2011), we might wish to withhold our judgement that women are being represented.

Conclusions

If there is a single conclusion to be drawn from our account of the political representation of women, it is that their exclusion from politics is ubiquitous, operated through layer upon layer of established male dominated institutions (not least political parties) that are insulated by layer upon layer of formal and informal rules of exclusion. The tasks involved in achieving sex parity in political institutions are enormous. There is no single reason for women's under-representation hence no single or simple solution. Moreover, it is not enough to secure simple parity of presence in legislatures, the institutions themselves must be re-gendered; be feminized.

Both the theory and the practice of representation are in a complex process of change that poses huge challenges research At least four broad themes are still to be explored in empirical research on women's substantive representation and may constitute the research agenda of the next decade or so. First, scholars must consider competing interpretations of what constitutes 'good' substantive representation as articulated by different representatives inside *and* outside of legislatures. Secondly, the contestation of particular claims and actions by those who are being represented demand consideration. For example, socialist, conservative, liberal feminist, black or poor women may disagree about whether they are being well represented by particular representative claims and acts. Thirdly, the quality of the representational relationship deserves greater attention. In other words, to what extent are our representatives examples of Dovi's (2002) 'preferable descriptive representatives' who have a sense of belonging to women, share their

aims, and have strong mutual relationships with those they represent. What is the quality of the communication and connections between the represented and the representative (Dodson 2006, 25) In all this, fourth, accountability) - too often the poor relation of representation - will need to come very much more to the fore.

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[1] We see no reason why it should be set at this level.

[2] Source: IPU, Sept 2010; quota project (http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/search.cfm)

[3] Celis et al 2010, citing Dodson and Carroll 1995; Swers 1998; Reingold 2000; Regen 2000; Taylor-Robinson and Heath 2003; Wolbrecht 2002; Bratton 2005; Dodson 2006.
women, and protecting and expanding reproductive health and rights.

[4] http://libarts.wsu.edu/polisci/rngs/; McBride and Mazur 2010,

[5] Currently, 186 countries have ratified or acceded to CEDAW, although the US is notable for only have signed it. http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en

[6] http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm

[7] Notwithstanding the tendency to refer to *gender* quotas, what is to be represented when we talk of descriptive representation is sex - the biological males and females whose presence as elected representatives in our political institutions can be counted.Measurement of women's participation in civil society and women's movement groups is less straightforward, as Essay # attests.

[8] Hawkewsorth 2003; Kathlene 1995; Carroll 2001; Trimble and Arscott 2003; Gotell and Brodie 1991; Dodson 2001; Chaney 2006; Thomas 1994; Weldon 2002; Reingold 2000; Swers 2002; Childs and Withey 2006; Childs 2008; Bratton and Ray 2002; Reingold 2008; Dodson 2006; Lovenduski 2005, Mateo-Diaz 2005; Bratton and Ray 2007.