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The Relationship between Levels of Gender and Ethnic Group Representation

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Abstract

This article examines the relationship between levels of gender representation and levels of ethnic group representation in national parliaments. Taagepera (1994) and Lijphart (1999) predicted that because of shared mechanisms and covariates levels of representation in the two forms should be positively correlated. Whilst this paper can identify a number of shared covariates, there is no evidence of an association between levels of gender and ethnic group representation. The lack of negative association suggests that increasing levels of representation in one form does not necessarily come at the cost of the other. Instead it appears that the salience and politicisation of divisions – approximated by the make-up of society – may shape the relationship between levels of gender and ethnic group representation: representation scores tend to be higher in the forms of representation that are thought to be more salient.

Introduction

The political representation of women and ethnic minority groups in national parliaments is frequently studied. Such studies are interested in the factors that are associated with high levels of parliamentary representation. Inclusiveness is a fundamental criterion for democracy (Dahl 1985), but higher levels of representation have also been linked to reduced political alienation and increased trust (Bieber 2004; Farrell and Scully 2007; Sisk and Reynolds 1998). The idea is that without representatives in parliament, members of minority groups are less likely to accept the outcome of elections as legitimate, and are thus more prone to

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conflict. This means that higher levels of ethnic group representation are associated with political stability more generally (Reynolds 2006; Van Cott 2005).

The level of political representation in national parliaments can also be regarded as an indication of the status of women and ethnic minority groups in society. The key argument here is that the proportion of women and ethnic minorities in parliament is a reflection of their real position in the public sphere (Childs 2000; Kimmel 2004; Squires 1996; Thomas 1994). Indeed, in countries where the number of female parliamentarians is high, the number of women in public positions of responsibility also tends to be high (Thomas 1994; Vallance 1979). In this sense, it can be argued that high levels of gender and ethnic group representation are indicative of a society with good gender and race relations. Identifying the factors shaping levels of representation may also help improve the status of women and minority groups.

High levels of gender representation are commonly found to be associated with the electoral system in place, the supply of suitably qualified candidates, the presence of gender quotas, as well as cultural factors (e.g. Dahlerup 2006; Norris 2004; Paxton 1997; Paxton and Kunovich 2003; Tripp and Kang 2007). There are fewer contributions on the representation of ethnic minority groups in national parliaments, but in general the same factors are thought to shape levels of representation (Bochsler 2006; Moser 2004; Norris 2004; Reynolds 2006; Ruedin 2009; Saggar 2000; Togeby 2005; Welch 1990).

Given that the same factors are identified as contributing to higher levels of gender and ethnic group representation, levels of gender representation and levels of ethnic group representation can be thought to be associated. In a country where levels of gender representation are high, ethnic minority groups can be expected to be represented relatively well. Indeed, Taagepera (1994) and Lijphart (1999) suggested that where data on ethnic group representation are absent, data on gender representation offer a reasonable approximation – and vice versa. The focus of this article is exactly on this premise, examining the relationship between levels of gender representation and levels of ethnic group representation. In particular, this paper addresses the question of whether levels of political representation tend to be similar for both women and ethnic minority groups, or whether the relationship between different forms of representation is more intricate. Given the strong claim in the literature that levels of representation in one form are a good indicator of the levels of representation in the other, this relationship is of great methodological interest.

It appears that levels of gender and ethnic group representation are only studied in isolation: studies concerned with the political representation of women do not directly address the representation of ethnic minority groups, or vice versa. Some of the comprehensive studies on parliamentary representation consider multiple forms – including gender, age, and education – but no attempt has been made to compare the differences in levels of representation (Converse and Pierce 1986; Copeland and Patterson 1998; Norris 2004; Ross 1943). As far as I know, this is the first time that such a direct comparison has been done in a quantitative cross-national manner.

Htun (2004) considers both gender and ethnicity, but focuses entirely on the nature of quotas rather than questions of political representation. Norris (2004)

treats the representation of women and ethnic minorities in separate chapters, but stays clear of a comparison. She draws on Taagepera (1994) and Lijphart (1999) who argue that the under-representation of women and ethnic minorities can be understood as two sides of the same coin. They argue that the level of representation in one form may be used to approximate the other. The underlying argument is that systems that are more proportional are beneficial for the inclusion of all kinds of minorities: 'What we know about women's representation should [also] be applicable to ethnoracial minorities' (Taagepera 1994:244).

The argument presented is based on shared mechanisms and underlying factors that shape levels of both gender and ethnic group representation. The intuition is that some variables are positively correlated with higher levels of representation of women and minority groups in general. Shared covariates need not necessarily lead to positive correlations; and positive correlations can be the result of other – unidentified – underlying causes. The argument, however, is made on a theoretical basis. Taagepera (1994) and Lijphart (1999) base their theoretical argument on institutional factors, but the association is untested as such. A similar argument has been made with cultural environments as the underlying factor. The view is that the political environment of a place can increase the salience of minority concerns and encourage the inclusion of both women and ethnic minority candidates (Aroũjo and García 2006; Baldez 2006; Heath, Schwindt-Bayer, and Taylor-Robinson 2005). Rule and Zimmermann (1994) make a case that it is the combination of cultural factors and the electoral system that forms a barrier to the inclusion of women and ethnic minority groups in parliaments. Following this reasoning, *it can be expected that levels of gender representation are positively correlated with levels of ethnic group representation* (H1).

It is also possible to envisage the relationship between gender and ethnic group representation in a different way. Rather than focusing on shared covariates, a case can be made for a direct trade-off between levels of representation: high levels of representation in one form are likely to come at the cost of the other (Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004; Grey 2006). Such a direct trade-off would occur if voters were more often than not forced to choose between either women or candidates from an ethnic minority group, because the available candidates mean that it is impossible to vote for both. If the voters on average deal with such cross-pressures in a similar manner, and levels of gender representation are directly traded off against the level of ethnic group representation, a negative correlation is the consequence. The expectation therefore is that *levels of gender representation are negatively correlated with levels of ethnic group representation* (H2). However, since the attributes of gender and ethnicity are not exclusive (it is likely that some of the candidates are women from an ethnic minority background), there is little reason to assume that voters are frequently forced into such a direct trade-off, and this hypothesis seems less likely than the one where a positive correlation is predicted. What is more, this argument focuses on the actions of the voters, ignoring the important role political parties play in the nomination of candidates.

A different view is that the relationship between levels of gender and ethnic group representation is characterised by the salience and politicisation of the corresponding division rather than a direct trade-off. In this context, the salience of

social divisions refers to the awareness and politicisation of under-representation of women and ethnic groups. For example, during an election campaign, a party can attempt to actively appeal to women by highlighting differences between men's and women's needs in modern society; or a party can publicly associate issues of land rights with ethnic divisions. In such circumstances, it is likely that individuals become more conscious of their own group identity, and might be more likely to vote on such a basis. This factor of salience and politicisation is highlighted in the scant literature on the relationship between levels of gender and ethnic group representation: the premise is that where divisions are more politicised, it can be assumed that voters are more likely to vote on that basis (Birch 2000; Grey 2006; Mateo Diaz 2005). The relationship between levels of ethnic and gender representation may thus be affected by varying awareness: the more salient division can be expected to lead to higher representation scores.

Whilst the argument still revolves around a trade-off between the representation of women and that of ethnic minority groups, of interest here is the salience of ethnic divisions relative to the salience of gender divisions in society. The expectation is that where the relative salience of ethnic divisions is higher than that of gender divisions, the levels of ethnic group representation exceed those of gender representation. The reverse should also follow – higher levels of gender representation where the relative salience of gender divisions exceed that of ethnic divisions.

Empirically, the salience of divisions and awareness of under-representation is difficult to attain. For ethnic divisions, in this article, it is assumed that such differences are more politicised in societies that are more heterogeneous – societies where the ethnic minority population is larger and the number of ethnic groups is higher. Consequently, the ethnic heterogeneity of a society is understood as a proxy of salience. This measure is not perfect because there are other influences on the salience of ethnic divisions in a country, such as historical reasons. However, ethnic heterogeneity scores are probably the best available data for cross-national analyses. Given that the proportion of women is relatively constant across societies, no measurement of gender heterogeneity can be included in this article. For the purposes of testing this hypothesis, the level of ethnic heterogeneity is used as an approximation of the relative salience of ethnic divisions. The argument that follows is that *where ethnic heterogeneity is high, ethnic representation scores are expected to be relatively high compared to gender representation scores* (H3). By extension, where ethnic heterogeneity is low, levels of gender representation are expected to be relatively high compared to levels of ethnic group representation.

In addition to the methodological interest, the comparison of levels of gender and ethnic group representation is also of interest because voters are normally given a single vote with which they are expected to achieve various different things, including considering different forms of representation. Similarly, political parties are realistically restricted by the number of candidates that they can nominate. This leads to the question of whether it is possible to improve the situation of women and ethnic minority groups at the same time, or whether trade-offs between the two forms of representation tend to prevail. Such trade-offs might

be more prominent in the context of specific national elections or policy debates, particularly where the interests of the different groups are thought to clash. However, given that women and ethnic minority groups are numerically under-represented in many countries, the question of a trade-off between the two forms of representation remains of universal interest.

Data and Methodology

In order to calculate gender and ethnic group representation scores, data on the composition of the population and the parliament are required. Representation scores are calculated by dividing the proportion of women or ethnic minorities in parliament (E_{parl}) by the corresponding proportion in the population (E_{pop}): $R_E = E_{parl}/E_{pop}$. For ethnic group representation, the proportion of all ethnic minority groups combined is considered, for gender the proportion of women is taken as the basis. Different minority groups are combined so that a cross-national assessment is possible. The representation scores are simply a statement of what proportion of the minority population is included in parliament, irrespective of its size. The values range from zero where women and ethnic minorities are absent in parliament, to values greater than one, where they are numerically over-represented. The latter happens for some individual ethnic groups. The representation scores are sensitive to outliers, which means that in the analyses median values are compared.

The number and percentage of women in parliaments across the world is collected and made available by the *Inter-Parliamentary Union* (IPU 2006). The data are provided by the parliaments themselves, and there are no definitional issues involved. The percentage of female members of parliaments is as of July 2006, and covers single or lower chambers. Upper chambers are not covered in this article, because where there are two chambers, members of the upper chamber are frequently appointed rather than elected by the public. Despite this, where two chambers are present, representation scores for the lower chamber and the upper chamber tend to be similar ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.001$). In order to assess the composition of the population, the percentage of women in a country is taken from *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Britannica 2006). Setting the proportion of women in the population to 50% rather than taking more accurate estimates does not affect the results noticeably ($r = 0.99$, $p < 0.000$).

I understand ethnic groups as groups of people who are related through kinship and have an awareness of a shared culture and ancestorship. This means that ethnicity refers to self-declared group membership (Jenkins 1997). Despite elements of choice – ethnicity being what one identifies with – ethnic identities are rather stable (Green 2005; Hoddie 2006). For this reason, a systematic analysis of ethnic groups is possible.

The representation scores used for this article are based on newly collected data on the ethnic composition of parliaments. These data are taken from official parliamentary documentation, official biographies, as well as information provided by parliamentary contacts. I contacted all parliaments in July 2006, with an overall response rate of 27%. The data I collected were complemented with data

by Alonso and Ruiz-Rufino (2007), Reynolds (2006), as well information included in country reports published by the U.S. Department of State (2006). For the Netherlands, I obtained additional data from Latner and McGann (2005); for Brazil from Johnson (1998). Alonso and Ruiz-Rufino collected data for sixteen countries in Eastern Europe; Reynolds covered a range of countries across the world, whereas the U.S. Department of State reports cover most countries. Rather than single estimates, Alonso, Ruiz-Rufino, and Reynolds use averages for two or even three elections where applicable. The data in these additional documents also tend to allow self-declaration of ethnic group membership rather than imposing a category. All the data are based on the number of parliamentary seats.

Because of the multiple data sources, I have two or even three data points for many of the countries. In no case can apparent discrepancies between the sources be determined: the same ethnic groups are generally identified, and the estimates on how many parliamentarians fall into each group also tend to agree. The data seem robust, and the substantial results of the statistical calculations are not affected by substituting data sources. The data for the population are taken from national statistics, Britannica (2006), and Fearon (2003). Although citizens may have a stronger claim for representation, I was forced to use data on the population rather than exclusively citizens for many countries because of availability. I cannot determine a case where this difference appears significant enough to distort the reported findings.

The resulting dataset covers ninety-five free and partly free countries (Freedom House 2006), out of a total 131 free and partly free countries. Freedom House classifications are based on expert judgements, but a rigorous and standardised approach is used. This should minimise the level of subjectivity involved in the data and allow comparability. Regional experts and scholars make use of information provided by reputable newspapers and organisations to judge the freedom enjoyed by the population. By excluding unfree countries from consideration, this article presumes relatively meaningful and competitive elections, with the result that presence in parliament is linked to power and decision-making.

Unfortunately, the data do not allow a detailed analysis of the individual candidates, such as examining whether women are more or less prevalent among ethnic minority candidates. Since the data for women and ethnic groups are collected independently of each other, it is impossible to characterise the interplay between gender and ethnicity in any specific election – calculating how many of the women representatives come from an ethnic minority background. Future research is needed to collect such data.

The relative salience of ethnic divisions is approximated with the ethnic heterogeneity of a country. This variable describes the extent to which a country is fractionalized into different ethnic groups. Its measure is based on the proportion P_i of different ethnic groups in a country: $H = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^{n} P_i^2$. This paper uses Fearon's (2003) data set. Whilst it is possible to distinguish between historical ethnic diversity and ethnic diversity due to more recent migration, in practice the distinction is not clear-cut. What is more, from a justice point of view, ethnic minority groups have a right to be integrated, regardless of the history that makes them minorities.

Turning to explanatory factors for levels of representation, there are different approaches to capture relevant cultural attitudes. The predominant religion of a country is often highlighted, but it is possible to capture cultural attitudes using data from the *World Values Survey* (2006). The attitudes of interest are reminiscent of the concept of sociological liberalism: support for a peaceful cooperation and coexistence of different groups in society, often linked to ideas of equality (Crouch 1999). The focus is on attitudes towards marginalised groups in society. The *World Value Survey* asks respondents what kinds of neighbours they would not tolerate ('On this list are various groups of people. Could you please mention any that you would not like to have as neighbors?').

Because some single questions appear unreliable and attitudes relevant to both gender and ethnic minority groups are of interest, a ten-item scale is calculated, using a range of potential neighbours as the basis: people with a criminal record, people of a different race, heavy drinkers, emotionally unstable people, Muslims, immigrants or foreign workers, people with AIDS, drug addicts, homosexuals, and Jews. This is not to imply that different ethnic minorities and women actually were criminals or otherwise deviant, but that their position in society is improved in places where marginalised groups in society tend to be tolerated. The scale in principle ranges from zero to ten, depending on how many kinds of people were mentioned as unacceptable neighbours (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$). I have inversed the scale so that a higher score on this scale indicates that a respondent is more tolerant towards marginalised groups in society. The national means are used, ranging from just under two to about six, meaning that there is significant variance between countries.

The values on this scale correlate highly with questions such as attitudes towards women as political leaders ($r = 0.73$, $p < 0.000$), agreement with the statement that a university education is more important for boys than for girls ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$), or scales that capture racist attitudes ($r = 0.85$, $p < 0.000$). This makes the variable used in this article both a valid and reliable measure of liberal attitudes related to the participation of women and ethnic minority groups in the public sphere.

In line with all the literature considering political culture in one form or another, issues of causality cannot be completely resolved (Fuchs 2007). The argument is not only that cultural attitudes affect levels of representation, but also that to a small degree such attitudes may be affected by the actual composition of parliament. However, there are a great number of other influences on cultural attitudes, including the prevalent religion of a country, the level of development, or historical regional differences; and role models from visible public positions other than parliament, suggesting that the main influence is from cultural attitudes to levels of representation.

Findings

The first hypothesis focuses on the shared mechanisms and covariates for levels of gender and ethnic group representation. The intuition here is that the same explanatory variables are associated with high levels of representation in both

cases. As a first step, I examine the covariates for levels of gender and ethnic group representation.

Contributions covering the representation of women in parliament often highlight the electoral formula, the presence of quotas, as well as cultural factors. With the data used, the electoral formula is associated with higher levels of representation, although the evidence is not certain once controlling for cultural attitudes or religious differences. The same is the case for the presence of voluntary gender quotas, which in the cross-national comparison appear unable to affect levels of gender representation significantly. Levels of gender representation tend to be higher in more established and developed democracies, and as expected religious and cultural differences are associated with levels of gender representation. In line with some recent contributions, it was found that cultural attitudes appear to be the strongest correlate for levels of representation.

For ethnic group representation, the picture looks similar. A key difference is that contrary to predictions from single-country studies, the electoral formula does not appear to be a significant covariate for levels of ethnic group representation. Apart from implementation issues in many places, the presence of quotas and reserved seats for ethnic minority groups appears to be associated with higher levels of representation. Similarly, more established democracies tend to come with higher levels of representation. As was the case with gender representation, the predominant religion of a country and cultural attitudes are strongly associated with different levels of ethnic group representation.

For both the levels of gender representation and ethnic group representation, cultural attitudes appear to be the key covariates. Other shared covariates include the level of development, and the number of years since democracy was established. Similarly, the predominant religion of a country is associated with the level of gender and ethnic group representation, although this may merely reflect the different cultural attitudes. In any case, the fact that shared covariates could be identified means that the first hypothesis has some merit. However, the argument that levels of representation are linked within countries looks unsubstantiated by the actual representation scores. The representation scores for gender and ethnicity do not correlate significantly ($r = 0.13$, $p > 0.1$). This means that levels of ethnic group representation are not generally associated with levels of gender representation. The shared underlying factors found are not reflected in the correlations between levels of gender and ethnic group representation, and hypothesis H1 cannot be supported.

The second hypothesis focuses on the citizens: voters may not have the option to vote for both gender and ethnicity at the same time. This would occur if they were more often than not forced to choose between either women or male candidates from an ethnic minority group. Consequently, where levels of gender representation are directly traded off against the representation of ethnicity, a negative correlation between different representation scores can be expected (H2).

However, as outlined in the context of the first hypothesis, there is no significant correlation between levels of gender and ethnic group representation. This lack of association equally means that no negative correlation can be found. In other words, levels of ethnic group representation appear to be unrelated to levels of

gender representation. The lack of negative correlation means that there is no evidence for a direct trade-off between the two forms of representation, as stipulated in hypothesis H2.

In order to address the nature of a possible trade-off between levels of gender and ethnic group representation, it is necessary to look at the difference between representation scores. When comparing levels of ethnic group representation and gender representation, it can be observed that for many of the countries the difference of values is rather large, although there are also countries where the levels of representation in the different forms largely coincide. Overall, the levels of gender representation tend to be lower than levels of ethnic group representation, often significantly lower. The mean representation score for gender is 0.32 (median 0.28), whilst the mean score for ethnic groups is 0.78 (median 0.44). This difference between representation scores might be a reflection of the fact that in terms of gender all countries are necessarily highly heterogeneous, a fact which is addressed in the subsequent analysis for the final hypothesis.

The third hypothesis is concerned with the salience of demographic cleavages in society (H3). The argument is that representation scores are higher in forms of representation that are more salient. As outlined above, the actual make-up of society may be used as an indicator of the salience and politicisation of demographic differences. For instance, in countries that are ethnically more heterogeneous, the salience of ethnic divisions may exceed that of gender differences. The expectation in this case is that levels of ethnic group representation exceed levels of gender representation. Presumably, the reverse is also the case. As outlined above, no adequate data on the politicisation of gender appear to exist, so the expectations following hypothesis H3 are as follows: in places where ethnic heterogeneity is high, the level of ethnic group representation is expected to be higher than the level of gender representation. In contrast, in places where ethnic heterogeneity is low, the level of gender representation is expected to be higher than the level of ethnic group representation. As outlined above, the representation scores used in this paper are based on ratios, and outliers may affect the findings a great deal. Therefore, median values are compared in table 1.

As visible in table 1, both the propositions outlined above are supported. In places where ethnic heterogeneity is higher than average, the level of ethnic group representation is higher than that the level of gender representation ($0.63 > 0.30$). In these places the salience and politicisation of ethnic divisions is assumed to be larger than gender divisions. At the same time, in places where the ethnic make-up of society is more homogeneous than average, the level of gender representation is higher than the level of ethnic group representation ($0.37 > 0.28$). In these places, levels of gender divisions are thought to be more salient and politicised than ethnic divisions. With that hypothesis H3 is supported: the salience of demographic divisions appears to be associated with the levels of gender and ethnic group representation achieved ($p < 0.01$).

In order to examine the relationship in more detail, I looked at the correlation between ethnic heterogeneity and representation scores for gender and ethnicity. Levels of ethnic heterogeneity are positively correlated with the difference between levels of ethnic representation and levels of gender representation

Table 1: Levels of Gender and Ethnic Group Representation in High and Low Ethnic Heterogeneity

	High Ethnic Heterogeneity	Low Ethnic Heterogeneity
Gender	0.30	0.37
Ethnicity	0.63	0.28

Notes: Differences are significant at the 0.01 level. Values of ethnic heterogeneity were split into higher and lower than average.

($r = 0.41$; $p < 0.000$). It is the case that levels of ethnic heterogeneity are positively correlated with levels of ethnic group representation ($r = 0.40$, $p < 0.000$), whilst they are negatively correlated with levels of gender representation ($r = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that in practice higher levels of gender representation are traded off against higher levels of ethnic group representation, in accordance to the relative salience of divisions – as measured by the level of ethnic heterogeneity. The different signs of the correlations mean that the reported relationship is not entirely driven by the relationship between levels of ethnic heterogeneity and levels of ethnic group representation.

Discussion

This paper examined the relationship between levels of gender and ethnic group representation. Two of the hypotheses tested were concerned with an overall association between levels of ethnic and gender representation (H1, H2). Even though some of the underlying factors are shared for levels of gender and ethnic group association, overall no significant association can be determined. A third hypothesis examined cases when ethnic and gender representation may differ (H3), illuminating the relationship between levels of gender and ethnic group representation. It appears that in places where levels of ethnic heterogeneity are higher than average – and with that presumably the salience and politicisation of ethnic differences increased – the level of ethnic group representation is greater than that of women. The opposite is also the case: where levels of ethnic heterogeneity are lower than average, the level of gender representation is higher than that of ethnic minority groups. This means that levels of representation appear to be higher in forms of representation that are more salient and politicised, as argued by Birch (2000) and Mateo Diaz (2005). In places where parties are likely to campaign based on gender and ethnic divisions in society, the level of representation of the groups in question appears to be higher.

Considering the fact that in many places representation scores for ethnicity are higher than for gender, it is possible to speculate about the order of events over time. It appears that in many places relatively high levels of representation of ethnic groups may precede higher levels of gender representation. Other forms of representation, such as religion, and then by extension the representation of sexual

orientation, towards (post-modern) lifestyle choices, may follow suit. Included in these considerations is the observation of increased demands for gender and ethnic group representation in parliaments on grounds of justice: success in one form may lead to demands in another (Allwood and Wadia 2004).

The order of events may of course differ depending on the salience of divisions in society – as demonstrated by the results for hypothesis H3. In some divided societies, the cleavage of religion, for instance, has lead to parties taking up religion in their programmes, and thus improving levels of representation. In other places, political parties select candidates from ethnic minorities for strategic reasons to win votes (Bird 2005). Here the parties and members of the political ëlite may play a role in politicising a certain division, although the results presented in this paper suggest that the actual make-up of society might be the prevalent factor. This means that historical aspects of nation-building may affect levels of present-day representation in parliament through the level of ethnic heterogeneity in a country.

At the same time, the lack of positive correlation suggests that Taagepera (1994) and Lijphart (1999) are incorrect that the measurement of gender representation is a good proxy for levels of ethnic group representation. It does appear that some variables are associated with both levels of gender representation and ethnic group representation, but this does not translate into similar levels of political representation. The results in this paper contradict expectations that certain institutional settings – such as proportional representation systems – are associated with higher levels of representation in general, as frequently argued in the literature (Baldez 2006; Bieber 2004; Horowitz 1985; Lijphart 1999; Yoon 2004).

With the salience and politicisation of divisions, this paper suggested a factor that appears to mediate the relationship between gender and ethnic group representation. I approached this using ethnic heterogeneity as a proxy of the relative salience of ethnic divisions. The result is that where ethnic divisions are thought to be more salient and politicised relative to gender divisions, ethnic representation scores tend to be higher than levels of gender representation. The inverse case – lower salience, lower representation scores – tends also to be the case. The results suggest that the actual make-up of society may play a significant role in shaping the relationship between levels of gender and ethnic group representation: representation scores tend to be higher in the form of representation that is thought to be more salient.

The fact that no negative correlation could be determined between levels of gender and ethnic group representation is significant for those interested in increasing levels of political representation. It appears that in practice levels of gender representation are not directly traded-off against levels of ethnic group representation, or vice versa. This means that high levels of political representation for women and ethnic minority groups are possible at the same time: there is no evidence that increasing levels of gender representation would compromise levels of ethnic group representation.

This may mean that the political ëlite could play a significant role in shaping levels of representation. By means of quotas and active recruitment of women and candidates from ethnic minorities, the ëlite seem to be able to influence levels of

representation. Whilst a radical increase of minority candidates may not be sanctioned by the population, and translate into serious electoral risks for the ĕlite, it appears that within the levels supported by the wider population, members of the political ĕlite have the means to influence levels of representation. An alternative way may be to focus on the politicisation and salience of under-representation, such as by means of awareness campaigns or making ethnic divisions a topic during election campaigns. The resulting increase in politicisation of gender and ethnic divisions may translate into awareness of the – often significant – under-representation of women and ethnic minorities in parliament, which appears to translate into higher levels of representation in national parliaments.

In the context of gender quotas, it is sometimes argued that quotas should be welcomed regardless of how well they are implemented (Bystydzienski 1995). The intuition is that the discussions that accompany the implementation of quotas raise awareness of the under-representation of women and ethnic minority groups. Such discussions can be of the exact form of quotas or the percentage that should be reserved for certain groups. Taking this approach, the actual implementation or enforcement of quotas is not a central concern, but the focus is on the discussions about the political integration of different groups in society. This argument fits well with the results presented in this paper, where the salience and politicisation of divisions appears to be closely associated with the level of representation achieved. However, if this argument is right, quotas and other forms of affirmative action could be replaced by a different stimulus to encourage discussions of equality and justice.

Conclusion

In this article, I considered the relationship between levels of gender representation and ethnic group representation. The paper can identify a number of shared covariates for levels of gender and ethnic group representation, in line with the argument by Taagepera (1994) and Lijphart (1999). Despite the shared underlying mechanisms and variables, however, there is no evidence of an association between levels of gender and ethnic group representation at the national level. The lack of a positive association indicates that Taagepera and Lijphart were incorrect when they predicted that levels of gender representation would be a good proxy for levels of ethnic group representation. The lack of negative association suggests that increasing levels of representation in one form does not necessarily come at the cost of another: higher levels of gender representation do not appear to come at the cost of levels of ethnic group representation, and vice versa. This lack of a direct trade-off is significant for those interested in increasing levels of representation for women or ethnic minority groups. It seems that it is possible to increase levels of representation in both forms at the same time.

In addition to outlining results that levels of gender representation do not appear to be associated with levels of ethnic group representation, this paper suggested that the salience and politicisation of divisions shapes the relationship between levels of gender and ethnic group representation. The results indicate that the actual make-up of society may play a significant role in shaping the relationship

between levels of gender and ethnic group representation by affecting the salience and politicisation of divisions: levels of representation tend to be higher in the forms of representation that are thought to be more salient. In other words, where gender divisions are thought to be more salient than ethnic divisions, levels of gender representation tend to exceed levels of ethnic group representation; and where ethnic divisions are thought to be more salient, levels of ethnic group representation tend to be higher.

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