

Gender and Political Representation

Concepts

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Logistics

Any thoughts on the syllabus?

- Assessment criteria
- Literature
- Other things

Logistics

Any thoughts on the syllabus?

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- Literature
- Other things

This is in general a dynamic syllabus which can change during the semester. If any questions come to your mind in the course of the term, please let me know!

Selection of Essay

After the session, you can pick a session on which you write your connecting thoughts essay [Learnweb]

- The session on which you prepare your essay should not overlap with a session for which you submit questions to the literature
- Submission of the essay is due Monday, 23:59, in the respective week
- You need to show up and briefly present your essay in the seminar!

On well-being...

Two important additions to last week's session:

1. information on sexualized violence and harassment in universities on the Learnweb
2. during the seminar, we might deal with content that may be distressing for some of us
 - please let me know if you feel overwhelmed or need support
 - please take a break if you need to

Plan for today

Today, we've got two points on the agenda:

1. Brief introduction into research at the Chair for Comparative Politics
2. Discussion about critical aspects in the study of gender and politics

What's good academic research for you?

In pairs, please discuss what's good academic research to you?
Think of an academic article you've recently read and elaborate
what you liked about it. Which elements should every piece of
academic writing contain? [5 minutes]

Academic Research

Good research

● ...

Criteria defined by KKV (1994)

King et al. (1994, pp. 16–17) define scientific research based on the following criteria:

1. Inference
2. Transparency
3. Probabilistic conclusions
4. Science is not the content, it's the *method*

Science is more than mere description (still important!), it's about identifying causal explanations of political phenomena.

Research at the Chair of Comparative Politics

We adopt a similar, **evidence-based** approach in our studies of political phenomena. This implies that we...

- ...formulate research questions that are of both theoretical and empirical relevance
- ...derive testable research hypotheses
- ...identify causal explanations
- ...use appropriate designs to test our expectations empirically

Academic research should follow a stringent and transparent research process.

The Comparative Method

As the Chair of *Comparative Politics*, the comparative approach is the core pillar of our research.

Do you have an idea why it might be important to compare?

An example

Example:

The more proportional an electoral system the more female MP in the national legislature.



Fundamental problem of causal inference

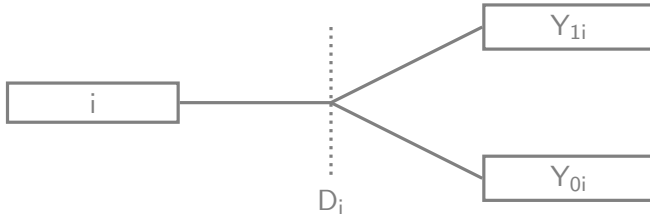


Figure: Potential Outcomes

¹see Cunningham (2021, pp. 125–128)

Fundamental problem of causal inference

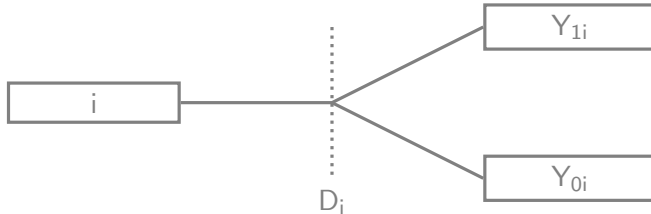


Figure: Potential Outcomes

Problem: We cannot observe the same unit in different conditions at the same time.¹

¹see Cunningham (2021, pp. 125–128)

Why comparison?



If we studied only one case, we would never know whether cats are responsible for bumpy roads.

Why comparison? II

“If we cannot rerun history at the same time and the same place with different values of our explanatory variable each time—as a true solution to the Fundamental Problem of Causal Inference would require—we can attempt to make a second-best assumption: we can rerun our experiment in two different units that are ‘homogeneous.’” (King et al. 1994, p. 90)

Comparative Designs

1. Experiments
2. Observational studies
 - Statistical studies
 - Comparative case studies

What counts as a comparison?

- A global study of how gender quotas have influenced women's representation in parliament?
- An experiment of how voters assess the competency of female and male candidates run in Switzerland?
- A study of how EU policy on gender has developed since the Treaty of Lisbon?

What counts as a comparison?

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- A study of how EU policy on gender has developed since the Treaty of Lisbon?

In the course of this seminar, we will define comparative politics more broadly. It's not necessarily a study across countries, but can very well be applied within countries (Pepinsky 2019).

Varieties of feminism...

We approach feminism as a “(1) a research paradigm that examines the form and character of gendered life (ontology), investigates what can be known (epistemology), and develops and deploys gender-centered tools of analysis (methods)” (Dhamoon 2013, March, p. 89)

Of sex, gender and sexual identities

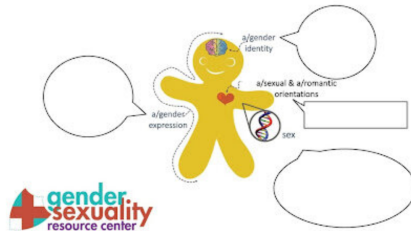


Figure: The 'Genderbread' (Graph by Princeton Gender + Sexuality Resource Center, developed by Sam Killerman)

In groups of five, complete the blanks in the graph.

Of sex, gender and sexual identities

Distinguishing sex, gender and sexual identities

- **Sex:** denotes the anatomic characteristics of a human being (as defined by genitalia, hormones and other physical features); it's assigned by birth
- **Gender:** socially constructed role ascribed to people
- **Sexual identity:** to whom one is attracted to

Of sex, gender and sexual identities

Sex is a biological concept whereas gender and sexual identity are social constructs. Do you agree?

Of sex, gender and sexual identities

Despite the differences between sex, gender and sexual identity, they should not be regarded in isolation

- gender is often inferred from a person's sex
 - if people identify with the gender they are assigned to, they are *cisgender*
 - if people do not identify with the sex assigned to at birth, they are *transgender*
- sex can also be regarded as a social category and more gradual than often assumed → e.g., what's the hormone threshold that distinguishes men from women (cf. Hawkesworth 2013, March)
- different components can interact in their effect on social and political outcomes

Intersectionality

How would you define intersectionality?

Intersectionality

According to Collins and Chepp (2013, March, 58ff.), intersectionality states that “gender, race, class, sexuality, age, ethnicity, ability, and similar phenomena cannot be analytically understood in isolation from one another; instead, these constructs signal an intersecting constellation of power relationships that produce unequal material realities and distinctive social experiences for individuals and groups positioned within them.”

Why is intersectionality important to the study of gender in politics?

Intersectionality

- gender is context-dependent, its influence is shaped by other individual characteristics (like race) and may differ across socio-political environments
- we often approach it from a *WEIRD* angle (Henrich et al. 2010)
- this course has some shortcomings as well, focusing a lot on Western countries and also Western (-based) scholars

Testimonies

In groups of five, watch the following videos and discuss which challenges female politicians describe in their day-to-day work in politics.



Figure: PBS: For Black women in government, highlighting threats and abuse can make it worse

- **Group A:** 0:50-3:50
- **Group B:** 3:50-end

Testimonies

Group C



Figure: Vice: America's powerful female politicians tell us how they broke the glass ceiling

Testimonies

Group D



Figure: Woman leaders in Europe share their personal 'Sofagate' experiences

Elements of female experiences in politics

- patriarchal power relations and how they persist after the first step (into office)
 - sexual harassment
 - physical abuse
 - cementing male dominance through gestures
- public/private divide: women stereotyped to be caregivers
- gender as a defining element of female politicians' work
 - pressure
 - identity conflicts
- intersectionality and varieties of experiences
- lack of critical mass and role models

What we've learned today...

- ...at least in theory: what constitutes 'good research'
- ...how the comparative method works
- ...what's the difference between sex, gender and sexual identity
- ...why intersectionality is important for our understanding of gender
- ...what we might need to study to understand gendered inequalities in political representation

To prepare for next week...

- Reading of the syllabus
 - Next week, we'll try to define representation and discuss whether fair descriptive representation is necessary for women's substantial representation in office
- Readings:
 - **Main reading:**
 - Mansbridge, J. (1999). Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent "Yes". *The Journal of Politics*, 61(3), 628–657. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2647821>
 - **Complementary readings:**
 - Pitkin, H. F. (1967). *The Concept of Representation*. University of California Press

To prepare for next week...

- Wolkenstein, F., & Wratil, C. (2021). Multidimensional Representation. *American Journal of Political Science*, 65(4), 862–876. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12563>
- you can submit questions to next week's session but no essay

Thank you for your attention!
Any further questions?

Literature

- Collins, P. H., & Chepp, V. (2013, March). Intersectionality. In G. Waylen, K. Celis, J. Kantola, & S. L. Weldon (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics* (p. 0). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199751457.013.0002>
- Cunningham, S. (2021). *Causal Inference: The Mixtape*. Yale University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1c29t27>
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Literature

- Hawkesworth, M. (2013, March). Sex, Gender, and Sexuality: From Naturalized Presumption to Analytical Categories. In G. Waylen, K. Celis, J. Kantola, & S. L. Weldon (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics* (p. 0). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199751457.013.0001>
- Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). Most people are not WEIRD. *Nature*, 466(7302), 29–29. <https://doi.org/10.1038/466029a>
- King, G., Keohane, R. O., & Verba, S. (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research, New Edition*. Princeton University Press.

Literature

- Mansbridge, J. (1999). Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent "Yes". *The Journal of Politics*, 61(3), 628–657. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2647821>
- Paxton, P., Kunovich, S., & Hughes, M. M. (2007). Gender in Politics. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 33(Volume 33, 2007), 263–284. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131651>
- Pepinsky, T. B. (2019). The Return of the Single-Country Study. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 22(Volume 22, 2019), 187–203. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051017-113314>
- Pitkin, H. F. (1967). *The Concept of Representation*. University of California Press.

Literature

Wolkenstein, F., & Wratil, C. (2021). Multidimensional Representation. *American Journal of Political Science*, 65(4), 862–876. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12563>