

GENDER & POLITICS

DECONSTRUCTING REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

DECONSTRUCT

To take apart or examine in order to reveal the basis or composition of, often with the intention of exposing biases, flaws, or inconsistencies

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/deconstruct>



“Women representation”

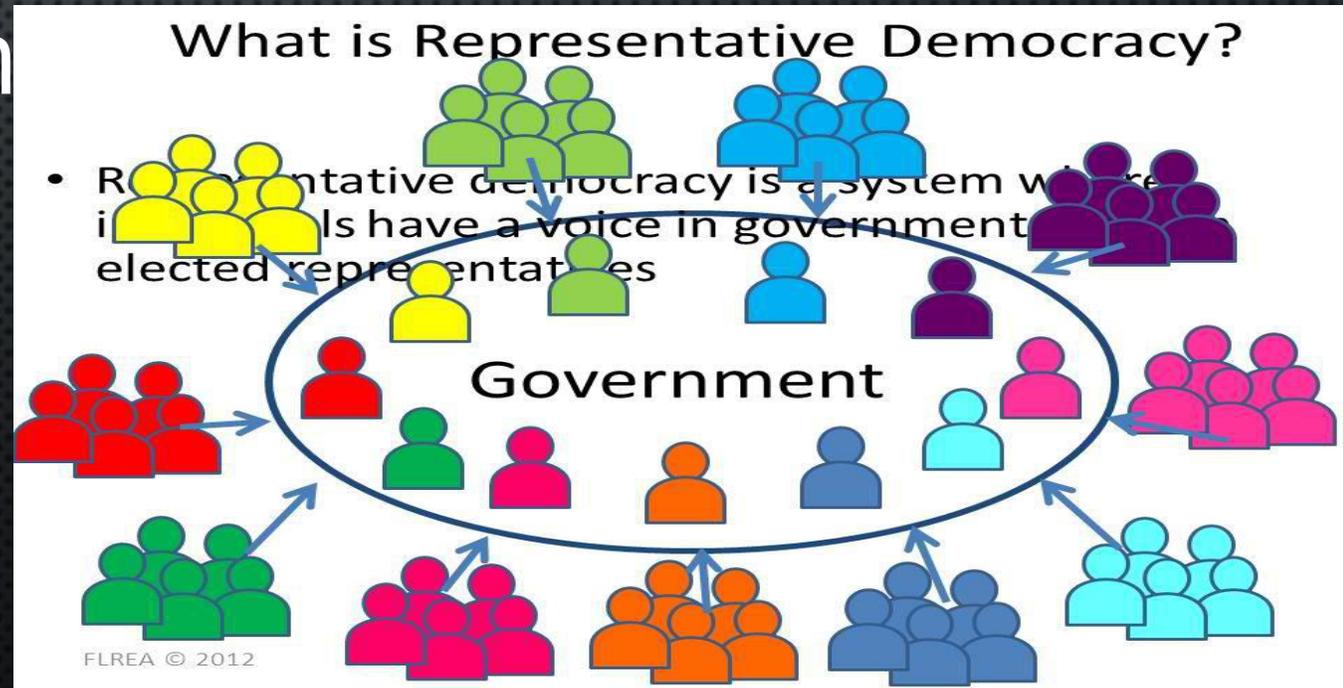
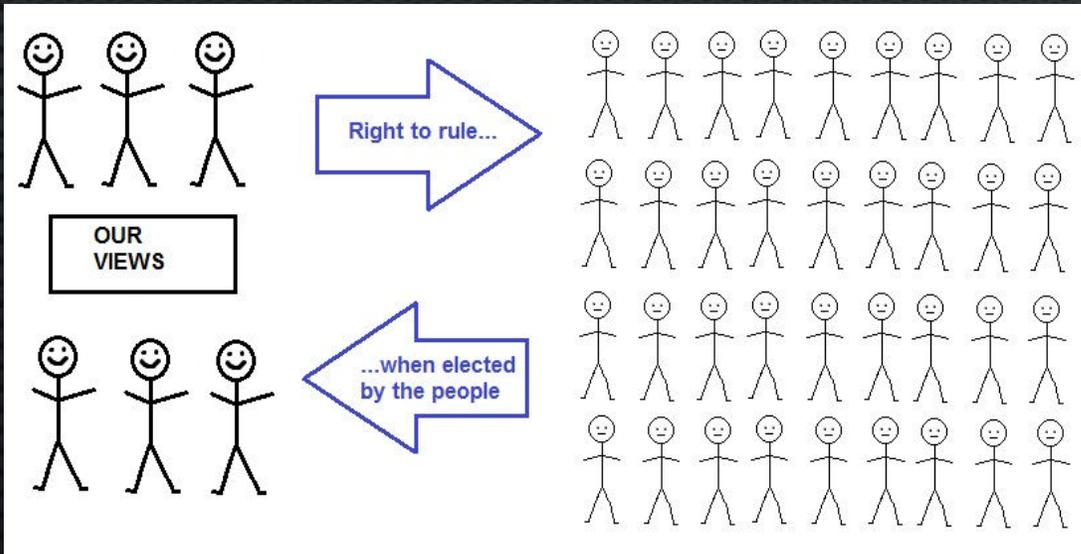
representative

represented



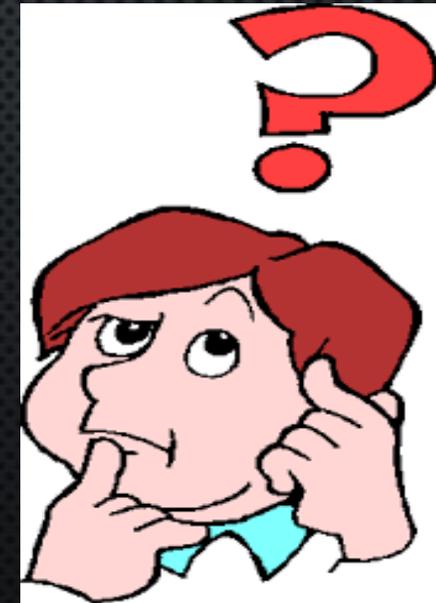
Representative democracy

(also indirect democracy, representative republic, or psephocracy) is a type of democracy founded on the principle of elected officials representing a group of people, as opposed to direct democracy.





Who should be this representative?



women's endeavour

absolute disapproval

relegating women in the confines of
the household maternal chores has
hitherto governed the lives of women

sceptical scoff

Historical Antecedents

a stunted, trapped and
unfulfilled existence

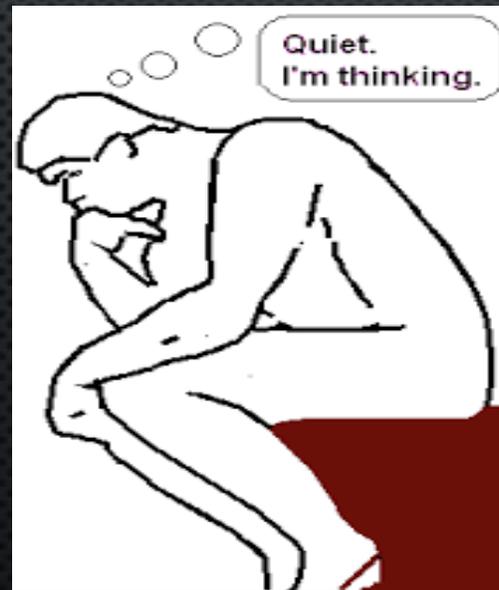
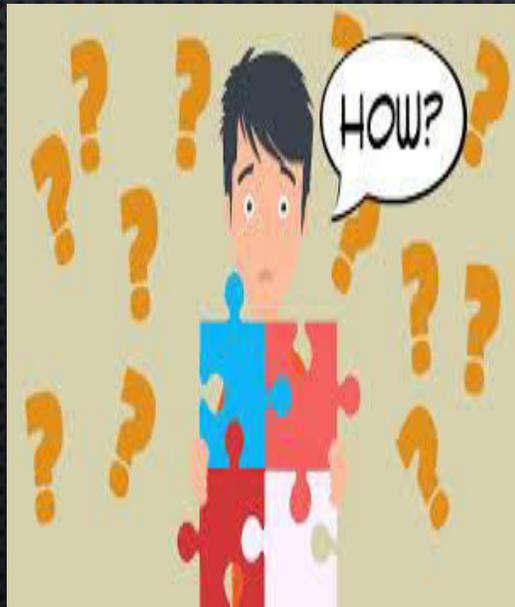
women
activism in the
name of still
unknown
women's
rights was
anathema

a thing of the past

Critical Mass Theory: speaks of the imperativeness of women forging a significant number in elected assemblies to be able to create women-friendly policies that can attract the approval of their male counterparts as far as women policies are concerned. Women representatives should be numerous to sustain the growth of interest and success in women-friendly legislation.(Childs, Krook 2008)

Others would single out women, calling solely to them to fight for policies and rights favourable to women.

My paper problematizes
this kind of narrative.



Substantive representation: it is “acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them”. Pitkin (cited in Celis 2008)

There are 3 criteria for this definition: that

1. “it is about representative acts”;
2. “the results of these representative acts should be in the interest of the represented” and finally,
3. “the representatives should be responsive towards the ones they represent”. (Celis 2008)

Descriptive representation demands the compatibility both in the preferences or interest and descriptive characteristics of the representative and his constituents.

As what Black (2013) states in her study quoting Pitkin, descriptive representation or “standing for” representation refers “to the identifying features that a representative might share with different constituencies . . .”.

So that we say that persons with disability are descriptively represented by persons with disability or that doctors are descriptively represented by doctors.

Childs and Krook on Gender and Politics: The State of the Art (2006)

Focal point: “not when women make a difference” but more on “how the substantive representation of women occurs”

In dealing with the dynamics of women in politics, the paper will deviate from the typical gender discourse on the inequality of men and women in the political scramble for office. While the paper presumes that indeed such inequality is obviously felt and experienced, a critical investigation will be more on the true import of representation, that is, women representation. It is believed that this is what makes the present study unique and different from other discussion on gender and politics.

Arguments:

1. the notion of exterior parallelism, i.e. descriptive representation, is insufficient and may result to a democratic deficit in the representation narrative
2. To generate policies beneficial to the cause of the women, it takes not only women to fight for them but others, regardless of similarity of descriptive identity
3. The imperativeness of possessing commitment and determination as drivers to stake ownership of women concerns.
4. substantive representation of women is not a 100% outcome of the increased women representation in elected assemblies as a tthesis statement that props up the Critical Mass Theory

Senator Raul Roco

“Honorary Woman”

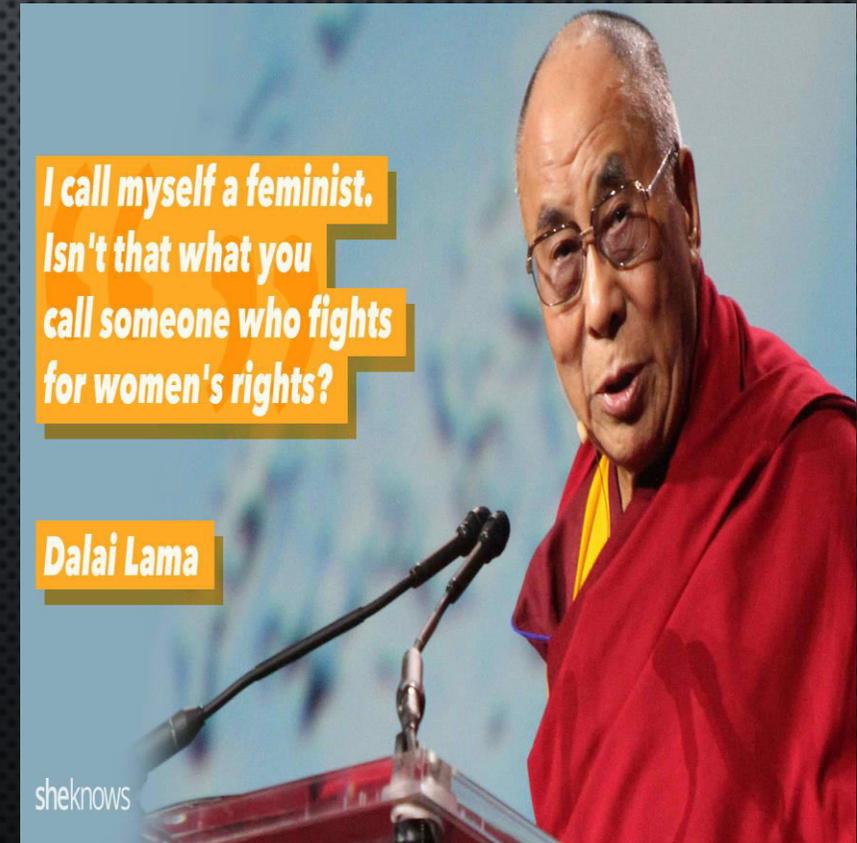
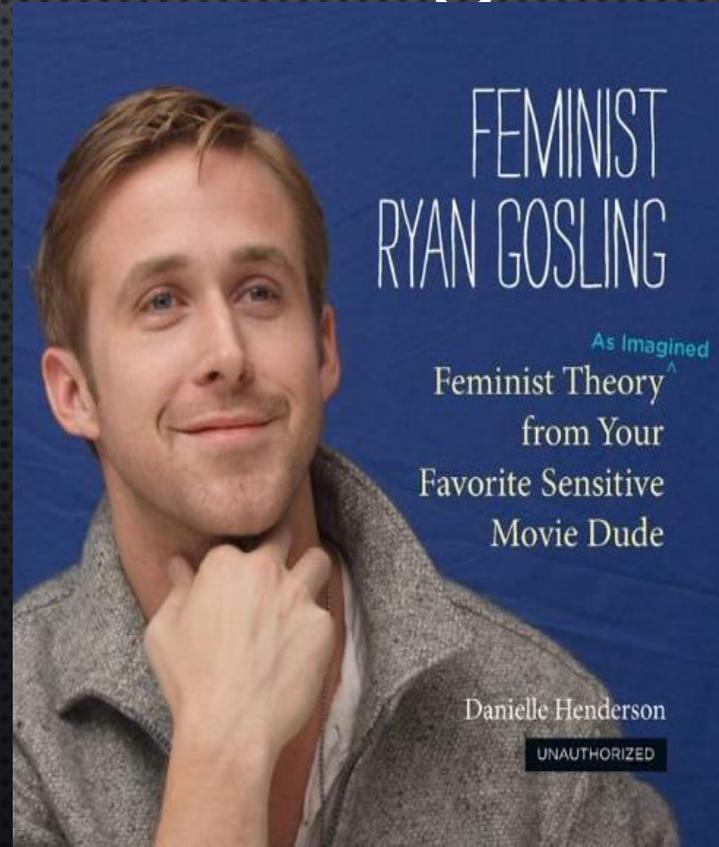
1. Republic Act 7192, “Woman in Development and Nation-Building Act;
2. Republic Act 7877. ‘The Anti-Sexual Harassment Law”;
3. Republic Act 8353 , “The Anti-Rape Law”; and
4. Republic Act 8369, “The Family Courts Act of 1997

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raul_Roco



“Male Feminism

Male personalities have stepped up to take the cudgel for women pledging their support for women’s rights



Arguments against the critical mass theory

The presence of other variables where descriptive representation may not always result to substantive outcomes (Chaney, P. n.d.)

The quota requirements for women in elected assemblies which, while increasing the number of women representatives and therefore adding to the voice of women, showed “that not all women identify with the group ‘women’”. (Escartin 2014)

The disadvantage of the gender quota is that it does not do well democratically as it results in the election of elite women and excludes those in the lower economic rung of the society. (Kang 2013)

Contribution of the present study

Adds to the bank of researches on gender and politics and indirectly on the importance of the goal of gender equality, especially on the imperativeness of gaining a foothold on the male and female partnership in putting into reality all other goals that will contribute to the attainment of women's concerns.

Researches on gender concerns that contribute to the substantive representation of women can be regarded as sine qua non in the attainment of the 5th goal - that of empowering women - of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals declared by the UN and adopted by the world in 2016. This replaced the Millennium Development Goals.

But most of all it puts across the message of a genuine representation beyond sex, group orientation and geography.

This becomes true when a truly representative democracy and substantive representation occur.

Representation does not always mean the mirror-image of the beneficiaries of the representation. This paper's premise is a genuine representation whose focal point is not on the descriptive or numerical characteristics of the representatives but more on the "critical acts" of the "critical actors" who, men or women, on their own can mobilize others to take on the torch to work for women's cause. Opportunities to catapult women-friendly concerns to prominence should not be a politics of gender nor sex that show the binary cleavage that rigidly separate the men and women. Rather a paradigm shift can be explored to make women representation include all people of walks of life whose concern on the plight of women is unconfined by sex or gender, transcendental as it is awe-inspiring and apolitical as it is unpretentious. This is the only way substantive representation of women occurs.