

Women in Public Policy and Public Administration?

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Abstract

This article explores the persistence of gender inequality in public administration in the UK and globally. The implications for the continued under-representation of women are explored. The data reveals vertical and horizontal occupational gender segregation, which the article argues, drawing upon representative bureaucracy research, has policy outcomes for beneficiaries of public services.

Impact

The recent social movement campaigns and media coverage about sexual violence against women (e.g. MeToo) has highlighted the prevalence of this egregious issue; the publication of the gender pay gaps in UK organizations despite the Equal Pay Act (1970) demonstrates continued inequalities; and as this article demonstrates the data on women in public administration reveals the persistence of gender inequality in public sector employment. This has implications for public administration institutions. The article argues that the lack of representation of women and other minorities has policy outcomes for the legitimacy, trust, integrity in public institutions, and public policy productivities and performance (Kingsley, 1944; Epp et al, 2014; Riccucci, Van Ryzin and Lavena, 2014; Peters, Schröter and von Maravic, 2015; Hong, 2016a; 2016b).

Introduction: Women in Public Policy and Public Administration?

There is persistent under-representation of women in public administration as secondary data reveals that across the globe there is variance in the representation of women within public sector organizations (see Figure 1). Central and Eastern Europe have relatively high rates of female representation in public administration institutions. This is explained by the communist legacy of the feminization of the workforce, women's higher educational attainment, state support for childcare and an egalitarian approach to female labour force participation (Pollert, 2005). The under-representation of women also reflects the paucity in female careers to leadership and senior decision-making positions (see Figure 2). So, while Ukraine may have 75% representation of women within the ranks of its public administration only 13% of women are represented in senior leadership levels and similarly in Russia where 71% of women are employed only 13% of women have reached leadership positions within its public administration (Ernst and Young, 2013). Other countries such as South Africa and Botswana are approaching parity in terms of overall representation of women in leadership positions. In the case of South Africa this is largely due to affirmative action policies and in Botswana the investment in education and public administration. As expected in more patriarchal cultures such as those of the Middle East the role of women in paid employment is restricted or even prohibited due to socio-cultural and religious mores.

In liberal democracies with traditions of greater equality such as the UK, Belgium, France, Netherlands and Germany there is an under-representation of women in public administration, despite decades of equality legislation and European Union (EU) policy directives. The lack of female representation in these countries is partly explained by a number of factors. In many of these countries there is a significant pay differential between public and private sectors. For

example, in Germany women in the public sector can expect to earn 23% less than their male colleagues (Ernst and Young, 2013; Eurostat, 2018). Other factors which affect female paid employment and labour market participation is the relatively high level of childcare costs (Ernst and Young, 2013); poor policy implementation of equality policy (Stratigaki, 2005); and extant masculine organizational cultures reinforced by Anglo-Saxon public administration reforms of New Public Management (NPM) (Stivers, 2002).

[insert Figure 1 and 2 about here]

The paper argues that women remain under-represented and under-employed in many public institutions of administration with implications for public policy and service delivery. The paper therefore first outlines the research method used to provide evidence for the argument. Second, the paper provides a review of extant research and literature on representative bureaucracy to substantiate the argument. Finally, the paper concludes with a research agenda and the view that the continued under-representation of women (and other minorities) in public bureaucracies undermines the performance and trust in public institutions.

Research Method

The research method for the paper involved a comprehensive review of secondary data on the representation of women in public administration and a systematic literature review (see Denyer and Transfield, 2009) of representative bureaucracy research.

The secondary data collection on the descriptive representation of women in public administration involved searches on websites of national governments, supranational organizations, and third sector and consultancy reports. The website searches involved collating data on the representation of women from datasets available from the UNDP, OECD, World Bank, European Commission, national government offices (e.g. South African Public Service Commission, UK Office of National Statistics), and publicly available reports (e.g. Fawcett Society, Ernst and Young) using the search terms: 'female'; 'women'; 'representation'; 'government'; 'public administration'; 'public sector'; 'public management' and/or 'public leadership'. While there was readily available data on female representation in legislatures there was less data on female representation in public administration. The collated data is represented in the figures and tables within this paper.

The systematic literature review first involved a literature search on the representative bureaucracy from Google Scholar, Emeraldinsight, Ingenta, JSTOR, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, Wiley Online Library and Web of Science. The search was limited to English-language books, book chapters and double-blind peer-reviewed journal publications to ensure the inclusion of robust empirical research. The first stage of systematic literature review examined year of publication; title; author(s); research focus; methodology; context of the study and research findings. It was observed that much of the research emanated from the United States of America (US) within the education sector and focused on African-Americans as a minority demographic group. The second stage of the systematic literature review was to categorize the research findings. An analysis of the research revealed three categories of research findings: (1) service outcomes for beneficiaries of representative bureaucracies; (2) legitimacy, trust and integrity of bureaucracies through improved representation; and (3) productivities and performance of representative bureaucracies. This categorization of the research is reviewed and discussed within this paper under sub-headings. The

final stage of the systematic literature review was to assess the research gaps and suggest a research agenda.

Female Representation in Public Administration

The lack of female representation in public administrations reveals vertical and horizontal occupational gender segregation. Vertical occupational gender segregation is often referred to as 'glass ceilings' where women struggle to reach leadership and senior decision-making positions (McTavish and Miller, 2006). In many public bureaucracies women tend to be concentrated in lower level and lower paid positions within the public sector hierarchy with paucity in career trajectories to the upper echelons (McTavish and Miller, 2006). Horizontal occupational gender segregation is when women are concentrated in specific sectors or professions of public administrations such as education and health sectors. This is referred to as 'glass walls' with women stereotypically associated with feminine professions such as caring roles (Guy and Newman 2004; Kerr et al 2002). There is also intra-professional gender segregation. For example, in the medical profession women tend to be concentrated in general practice careers, while men in careers perceived to be more prestigious such as surgery (Miller and Clark, 2008). The result of occupational gender segregation is often the under-value and under-employment of women.

A case in point is UK public administration. In terms of vertical occupational gender segregation women constitute 31% of civil service permanent secretaries, 40% of the senior civil service, 33% of local government chief executives, 28% of university vice-chancellors, 38% of secondary head teachers and 43% of National Health Service (NHS) chief executives (Fawcett Society, 2018). The data reveals paucity of female career progression to leadership positions despite the fact that the

overall number of female employees in UK public administration since 2001 outnumbered men (Fawcett Society, 2018). Despite the headcount number of female employees accounting for 68% of the UK public sector workforce (see Table 1), women face barriers to attaining leadership positions. Similarly, in local government where women constitute 78% and in the NHS 77% of the workforce women struggle to reach leadership positions (Fawcett Society, 2018). In terms of horizontal occupational gender segregation, women tend to be concentrated in health, education and social care with high proportion of the workforce being women. As Table 2 demonstrates the UK civil service has approached gender parity, but a disaggregation of data reveals that women are less represented in the Cabinet Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Chancellor's departments which are Great Offices of State; departments of Defense, International Trade and Transport; and regulatory agencies such as Food Standards Agency, National Crime Agency, Office of Rail and Road, and UK Export Finance. These types great offices and regulatory agencies are often associated with masculinity (see Newman, 1995). The secondary data provides descriptive statistics on the lack of female representation at leadership levels and in certain sectors and professions in public administration. What are the possible explanations for vertical and horizontal occupational gender segregation?

[insert Tables 1 and 2 about here]

Barriers to Female Representation in Public Administration

Much has been written about the barriers to women in organizations and progression to leadership positions and in professions. The barriers range from discrimination, prejudice, harassment, stereotyping gender roles, work-life conflicts, unconscious bias, to organizational culture, structures, and processes such as performance evaluation regimes and some reforms. The barriers to women in employment stem mainly from the social construction of gender in society (Walby, 1989). Gender is the societal values assigned to biological sex categories of male and female (Walby, 1989). Sex roles are translated into gender roles in society and the workplace (Rhode, 2003). Gender involves values and qualities attributed to masculinity or femininity (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 1995). Women's femininity is associated with their reproductive, maternal, caring and domestic roles (Gamble et al, 2006; Hakim, 2004). In most societies the social construction of sex creates gender roles where a patriarchal power structure is maintained (Nicolson 1996). Most societies value patriarchy with men in positions of power and women in subordinate roles. According to King (1995) societies value masculine behaviours of assertiveness, aggression and leadership above feminine values associated with nurturance, submissiveness and dependence.

Some observers argue that public life is considered the domain of men with women excluded or regarded as 'other' (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995; Mazur and Pollock, 2009). Public administrations like any other organization are gendered since the organizational dominance of men and control of power is to the disadvantage of women (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995; Ferguson, 1985; Kelly and Newman, 2001; Savage and Witz, 1992). King (1995) has identified four ways in which masculine power manifests in public administrations: (1) organizations are the domain of men because men are more likely to be leaders; (2) organizations are the masculine domain since expectations about gender is embedded in culture which leads to a preference for the

masculine over the feminine; (3) the state is a masculine domain and therefore governance, politics and the administrative state reflects the cultural preference for masculine over feminine; and (4) leadership and management is a masculine domain since society's cultural preference for masculine can be seen in definitions of leadership such as being assertive and aggressive.

Organizations value masculinity and associated agentic behaviours such aggression, assertiveness, control, ambition, dominance, forcefulness, independence, self-confidence, and competitiveness (Eagly et al, 2001). In an organizational context agentic behaviours include speaking assertively, competing, influencing and making problem-solving suggestions are valued (Eagly et al, 2001:783). Men who display agentic behaviours in organizations are valued and rewarded. While femininity associated with communal behaviours such as having concern for others, being helpful, kind, sympathetic, having interpersonal sensitivity, and being nurturing and gentle is less valued by organizations (Eagly et al, 2001:783). Studies have shown reward systems and work processes which privilege masculine traits and male working patterns reinforce organizational masculinity (Maier, 1999; Sheridan, 2004).

Much of the barriers to women's vertical and horizontal career progression in public administrations stems from the social construction of the biological categories of sex with masculinity being valued. The outcomes of the lack of representation in public administrations is demonstrated by extant research of representative bureaucracies.

Representative Bureaucracy

Representative Bureaucracy Theory

The theory of representative bureaucracy distinguishes between passive and active representation (Mosher, 1982). Passive representation refers to the extent to which a public institution includes individuals from demographic groups such as women, racial and ethnic minorities within the ranks of the bureaucratic organization (Bradbury and Kellough, 2011). Passive representation is the extent to which the public bureaucracy employs the proportionate share of population demography within its ranks (Ricucci and Saidel, 1997). Active representation is when a bureaucrat 'stands for' a demographic group by virtue of connection, resemblance and reflection (Pitkin, 1967:61). Thus the bureaucrat, consciously or unconsciously, ensures a citizen or group's interests with shared demographic identity included in policy-making (Bradbury and Kellough, 2011). The advocacy of citizens by bureaucrats of the same demographic group in the policy process is to ensure decisions benefit these citizens or is actively represented (Hindera, 1993; Keiser et al, 2002; Sowa and Seldon, 2003).

For active representation to take place, passive representation has to be present. Bureaucrats of the same demographic background as citizens they serve are influenced by socialization experiences and the development of values, attitudes and opinions, which influence their policy decisions (Bradbury and Kellough, 2007; Meier, 1993; Saltzstein, 1979). According to Meier and Nigro (1976:458) bureaucratic attitudes and values are determined by their social environment. When bureaucrats and the public share value orientation then bureaucrats will pursue and advocate courses of action for those citizens (Meier and Nigro, 1976). A number of studies have shown that passive representation with active representation has beneficial outcomes for minority groups

(Brudney, Herbet and Wright, 2000; Dolan, 2000; Dolan and Rosenbloom, 2003; Hinderer, 1993; Hinderer and Young, 1998; Keiser et al, 2002; Meier, 1975; Meier and Nicolson-Crotty, 2006; Reh fuss, 1986; Riccucci, 1987; Riccucci and Saidel, 1997; Saltzstein, 1983; 1986; Selden, Brudney and Kellough, 1998; Thielemann and Stewart, 1996; Weldon, 2002; Wilkins, 2006; Wilkins and Keiser, 2004; Wise, 2003).

Representative Bureaucracy: Outcomes

Meier, Stewart and England (1990) empirically demonstrated that as the number of African-American teachers increased across public school districts (passive representation), the inequitable segregation of African-American students into lower ability tracks and disciplinary measures decreased (active representation). Further studies by Meier and Stewart (1992) and Meier (1993) of other US school districts reached similar conclusions. Meier, Wrinkle and Polinard (1999) also found that in 350 school districts in the US both minority and non-minority students perform better in the presence of a representative bureaucracy. They concluded that the increased presence of African-American and Latino teachers did not have detrimental outcomes for white students and that both minority and majority groups benefitted in school performance by higher levels of minority representation. Similarly, Riccucci (2002) found that diversity in public sector organizations has beneficial outcomes for minority and majority groups from improved organizational performance.

Research by Wilkins (2006) and Wilkins and Keiser (2004) found that female child support enforcement supervisors provided active representation to female clients who directly benefitted from increased child support collections. Keiser et al's (2002) research of female administrators

and teachers in schools found that there were higher test scores and advance placement rates for girls since female bureaucrats identified with their sex as opposed to the organization. Bradbury and Kellough (2007:712) similarly found that attitude congruence between African-American bureaucrats and citizens proved to be a powerful predictor for active representation. Thus, attitudes and values shaped by socialization, as opposed to adherence to bureaucratic organizational norms, was important to active representation. Extant research that has empirically demonstrated the benefits of representative bureaucracies have found that there are factors which enable passive representation to be translated in active representation.

Meier's (1993) study concluded that representation is enhanced when there is political support and a critical mass of representation. Critical mass concerns the proportionality of representation (Kanter 1977). Kanter (1977) in her research of men and women in organizations found that an organization can have skewed representation when a majority group has preponderance over another; tilted representation occurs when ratio of majority to minority is closer; and balanced representation when there is equal proportionality between groups. Kanter (1977) found that organizations have mostly skewed representation with 'dominants' and 'tokens'. Kanter (1977) argued that women were 'tokens' in organizations as they were regarded as 'different' and risked exclusion from the dominant group (men) if they did not conform or were perceived to be disloyal (Kanter, 1977). Kanter (1977) argued that women's relative 'newness' in the labour market and workplace required adjustment from men in the organization, but as women become a more 'fixed' presence and increased in number in the workplace, men would learn to accommodate women in the organization. Kanter (1977) therefore argued for a critical mass of representation where

women's representation in the workplace and organization increased to the extent the 'skew-ness' was addressed.

Hindera and Young (1998) found that critical mass was a factor for active representation. They found that within US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) district offices there was an over-representation of minorities, which created a critical mass. Critical mass created an opportunity for cross-socialization with one group of bureaucrats affecting other's decision making (Hindera and Young, 1998:664). Hindera and Young (1998:668) showed that when: (1) the situational critical mass threshold was not exceeded, active representation could not take place; (2) critical mass was exceeded but there was no plurality of African-Americans, active representation emanated from passive representation at a basic level of policy implementation; (3) there is plurality but no majority of African-Americans, active representation results from passive representation from both African-American and white bureaucrats; and (4) African-Americans constitute a majority or is the dominant group in the organization, there is a hyper-responsiveness of active representation. However, much of the research on critical mass and representative bureaucracies aggregate findings for the organization or examines to critical mass at one level of a public organizations such as street level (see Lipsky, 1980). Few studies have attempted to disaggregate outcomes of representative bureaucracy at various levels of the organizational hierarchy. For example, while Andrews and Johnston Miller (2013) found active representation of women by female police officers at lower levels of the police hierarchy, Johnston and Houston (2018) found that active representation of women at leadership levels of the police did not hold true.

Another factor that influences active representation is discretion (Meier and Bohte, 2001). A study by Thielemann and Stewart (1996) found that there was beneficial provision of services to people living with AIDS at the level where bureaucrats and citizens interact. At street-level discretionary power enabled active representation (Keiser et al, 2002:556). Meier (1993) argues that bureaucracies which are more rule-bound, active representation is restricted as bureaucrats have fewer opportunities to shape services to benefit a particular minority group. Research by Seldon (1997) and Seldon, Brudney and Kellough (1998) also found discretion to be an important factor in the translation of passive to active representation. They found that within the US Department of Agriculture the Farmers' Home Administration Rural Housing Loan Program, African-Americans were awarded a larger proportion of loans in districts with a higher number of African-American county supervisors. Sowa and Seldon (2003) found that minority supervisors in the Farmers' Home Administration Rural Housing Loan Program would actively represent minorities if there were administrative discretion and minority role identification with the citizens. Furthermore, there were beneficial outcomes for a minority group when traditional bureaucratic rule adherence and standard operating procedure compliance were superseded (Sowa and Seldon, 2003).

Keiser et al (2002: 562) found that policy salience was important for active representation. They argued that active representation of women occurs when female bureaucrats identify with the women as clients of public services and when the policy issue influences the client-bureaucratic relationship (Keiser et al, 2002:556). A policy issue is gendered or regarded as 'women's issues' when: (1) the policy directly benefits women as a class; (2) the gender of the bureaucrat changes the client-bureaucratic relationship; or (3) the issue is identified as a women's issue by the political class (Keiser et al, 2002). Sexual violence is considered a gendered policy issue and more likely

that female bureaucrats would act in the interests of female victims (Andrews and Johnston Miller, 2013). A study by Meier and Nicholson-Crotty (2006) for example found that a larger percentage of female police officers were associated with a greater willingness among women as clients to report sexual assaults. There was evidence of active representation with higher sexual assault arrest rates by female police officers. Meier and Nicholson-Crotty (2006) concluded that female police officers shared a set of values about the seriousness of rape because they had a common set of gender related experiences (Meier and Nicholson-Crotty, 2006:858). A similar study by Andrews and Johnston Miller (2013) empirically proved that where there were higher levels of passive representation for women at street-level in English police forces there was a higher arrest rate for domestic violence. Collectively the research demonstrated that passive representation of women had resulted in improved service delivery for women as victims of sexual violence.

As mentioned above socialization and group identification is important in translating passive to active representation. However, identification and socialization can be mediated by organizational socialization (Johnston and Houston, 2018). Organizational context, structure, hierarchy, rules and regulations and norms may depersonalize relationships making bureaucrats less likely to identify with groups outside the bureaucracy (Ferguson, 1985; Keiser et al, 2002). Keiser et al (2002: 557-562) found that representative bureaucracy worked better for females in less hierarchical organizations. Keiser et al (2002:563) conclude that ‘for those seeking to increase active representation on the basis of gender, attention must be paid to not only increasing overall passive representation but also the structure of the organization and the representation at upper levels of the organization.’ Similarly, Johnston and Houston’s (2018) research found that senior female police officers, socialized in a masculine police organizational culture, adopted masculine values

and norms, and were less likely to actively represent women in addressing sexual violence. Kim (2003) research also found organizational socialization an important factor, which could affect active representation. Kim's (2003) study of the passive representation of women in the US Senior Executive Service (SES) showed that the allocation of line-item budgets benefitted women and minorities in the presidential request budget for the period 1979 to 1999. Kim (2003:556) argues that passive representation was necessary, but not sufficient since organizational socialization, recruitment processes, organizational rules and peer pressure restrain bureaucrats of certain demographics and social backgrounds from exercising active representation. Kim (2003) concludes that street-level bureaucrats are subject to less organizational socialization and will use their discretion at this level to advocate the interests of those who share the same demographic origins.

Dolan's (2000; 2001; 2004) studies of female passive representation in the SES also found that men and women held comparable responsibilities with women rating their influence of over policy in distributive agencies higher than those of men. Dolan (2001) found that the policy preferences of women in the SES was congruent with those of women as a minority group, suggesting that organizational socialization did not erode SES women in senior positions from actively representing women. In a later study, Dolan (2004:305) argued that distributive agencies were more conducive to female leadership and women progressed in these organizations by adopting strategies that worked for men. Another study by Reh fuss (1986) on the representation of women and minorities in executive positions of the California career civil service found women and minorities appear to share a 'management ideology' with their white male counterparts. This ideology is developed during organizational socialization and works against active representation

(Reh fuss, 1986:459). Wilkins and Williams' (2008) study demonstrated the affect of organizational socialization on active representation. They found that African-Americans and Latinos in the San Diego Police Department were racial profiling in the case of vehicle stops. Of significance was the finding that as the presence of black police officers increased so did the racial disparity in vehicle stops (Wilkins and Williams, 2008:660). The researchers found that in a bureaucracy, such as the police, where there are high levels of formal and informal organizational socialization, it is less likely that active representation will take place (Wilkins and Williams, 2008).

The extant scholarly research demonstrated that passive representation is important to the active representation of minority citizens and demographic groups. A review the research shows that critical mass, policy salience, discretionary power, and organizational structure and socialization are important factors for ensuring active representation and beneficial outcomes for recipients of public services.

Representative Bureaucracy: Trust and Legitimacy

In addition to beneficial service outcomes of representative bureaucracies, the extant research also demonstrates important implications for trust in public institutions. In most societies, women constitute approximately 52% of the population (UNDP, 2014), if half of a country's population is under-represented in its institutions of public administration, arguably it is not representative of the population it serves. Kingsley (1944) first argued, when writing about the British civil service, that a bureaucracy cannot be representative of society if its public administration is disproportionately drawn from elites. Thus, the notion of a public service that serves all of the

public is questionable when it does not represent the population. Public administrations that do not represent the society it serves, erodes trust and legitimacy in government (Peters, Schröter and von Maravic, 2015). Society may legitimately question whether its public administration, disproportionately drawn from one particular demographic group, can be trusted to make decisions and deliver services in the interests of society as a whole.

Epp et al (2014) book entitled, 'Pulled Over' has shown how stop and searches by police in the US has severe implications for African-Americans' trust and legitimacy in the police. The riots in the US after members of the African-American community were shot by the police when 'pulled over' is evidence of communities' loss trust in the police to protect, serve and uphold the rule of law and justice. Similarly, research by Hong (2016a) of UK police forces showed that an increase in ethnic representation resulted in a decrease in conduct complaints against the police. Hong (2016b) argues that a representative police force that reflects the community it serves may effectively catalyze bureaucratic integrity. Riccucci, Van Ryzin and Lavena (2014) also found that increasing the number of women in domestic violence police unit, increased female perceptions of trust, fairness and job performance of the public bureaucracy.

Representative Bureaucracy: Public Policy Productivities and Performance

A second and related outcome of unrepresented public administration is poor policy making. If policy makers do not include a broad spectrum of the populace, then societal interests as a whole would not be included the policy process. There is an input deficit in policy making. The quality of decision-making suffers, resulting in poor policy outcomes, service delivery and public sector

organizational performance (Johnston Miller and McTavish, 2014). Scholarly research has shown that more representative bureaucracies are better performing organizations.

Pitts (2005; 2009) for example found that more representative bureaucracies had higher levels of job satisfaction, which impacted upon organizational performance. Andrews, Ashworth and Meier (2014) found that more representative UK fire authorities tended to be more effective organizations. Peters, et al (2015) also found that representative bureaucracy improved quality of organizational output. This is explained by the fact that diverse bureaucrats contribute a diverse set of skills, knowledge and experience to the organization (Peters et al, 2015). They argue that there is a positive association between representation and overall organizational performance (Peters et al, 2015). Hong (2016b) found that there is increased organizational efficiency from greater diversity of viewpoints or ideas within an organization and therefore a wider array of resources is available for problem solving. A longitudinal study by Fernandez and Lee (2016) of South African national public administration departments from 2006 to 2013 found that organizations which were more representative of the population, in a post-apartheid dispensation, achieved a higher percentage of organizational goals. They found empirical evidence that the more representative public bureaucracies were more effective organizations (Fernandez and Lee, 2016). Andrews and Johnston Miller (2013) showed that more representation of female police officers resulted in more domestic violence arrest rates. Riccucci (2002) and Bradbury and Kellough (2008) research also found that more representative bureaucracies tended overall to be better performing organizations.

Although the benefit of representative public administrations is evident from extant research with implications for trust, legitimacy and performance, there remains a persistent lack of women and other minorities in public institutions despite legislation such as the UK Equality Act (2010) and EU gender equality policy directives (Miller, 2009). Thus, legislation in itself will not necessarily increase representation of public bureaucracies. The challenge for governments is to address the dominant masculine paradigm. Globally, governments have adopted neo-liberal public sector reforms such as NPM (Stivers, 2002) and a 'management ideology' (Reh fuss, 1986) in an attempt to improve the performance of the public sector. However, a paradox emerges. Governments attempts improve the performance of the public sector through NPM reforms reward and reinforce masculinity, which negates the gains of representative bureaucracies. Research is needed on the mitigating impact of public sector reforms on representation of women and minorities.

Research Agenda: Improving Representation

A review of secondary data and extant research reveals scope for future research to improve representation in public administration. First, there be a systematic evaluation of governments to increase the passive and active representation of women (and other minorities). In order to understand how to improve representation baseline data is needed. There is a research deficit on a global scale as well as a longitudinal analysis of the representation of women in public administrations. While the supranational bodies such as the UNDP, OECD and European Commission have raised the issue of gender equality and placed it on the policy agenda, there often lacks a sustained and systematic effort to study representation, career progression and policy outcomes for women. The collection and collation of secondary data for this paper, proved that

there needs a database of female representation in public administrations across the globe over a number of years. The dataset could include data on representation at national and sub-national levels as well as types of public institutions (e.g. police). The data would prove useful for national governments and public administrations in benchmarking representation and what actions are needed to redress the lack of representation. Thus, across countries, levels of government and types of public institutions (e.g. distributive, regulatory, etc.) lessons could be learned and better practices shared. For example, the data has shown that Botswana has made gains in female representation, but beyond the descriptive analysis there should be further research on how these gains were achieved and implications for women as public sector employees and recipients of services. Similarly, at sub-national level in the UK the Scottish First Minister (a woman) has appointed a gender balanced government with a female Permanent Secretary. Here too are lessons to be learned across devolved polities of whether passive representation has resulted in active representation and the implications for women. The outcomes for women employed and as beneficiaries of types of public sector organizations (e.g. distributive versus regulatory) would offer valuable comparative data.

A related and second research agenda issue is to address a research deficit of the impact of political culture and architecture on the representation of bureaucracies. There has been research, from a political science perspective, on the influence of feminist movements on public policy (see Mazur, 2002) and how political culture and architecture can enable or hinder the representation of women in public policy (Haussman et al, 2010; Chappell 2002). For example, Haussman et al's (2010) found that the political culture and architecture creates opportunities for women's political activism through access to multiple policy making sites; enables forum shopping which allows women to work around blockages at one level of governance to take advantage of another; and

policy innovations in one jurisdiction are transferred to others. There is scope for further research on the extent to which a masculine political culture inhibits the passive and active representation of women in public sector employment as well as women as beneficiaries of public services. Similarly, research is needed on the extent to which the political architecture of a country with sub-national polities enables or inhibits passive and active representation.

A third issue for a research agenda is to disaggregate organizational hierarchies and analyse intra-organisational and intra-professional representation. As mentioned previously much of the research is conducted at the lower levels of the hierarchy and within one public sector organization. More meaningful organizational interventions could be made if there was a holistic analysis of representation within organizations, professions and across public sector organizations. Furthermore, an analysis of the impact of critical mass, where it may exist, at various levels of an organization could provide a more nuanced insights of critical mass within contemporary public sector organizations. The examination of critical mass and representation at all levels of an organization would also offer opportunities for lessons to be learned and knowledge to be transferred. Finally, it is worth noting that much of the research on representation stems from the US. There is scope for comparative international studies, drawing on the suggested dataset (see above), to understand representation within contexts and cultures of various societies. Globally, policy or knowledge transfer on ways in which to improve representation in public administration is needed.

Finally, while this paper focussed on the representation of women in public administration there is scope for research beyond gender or race (mostly evident from the US). Research on the lack of

other minorities as well as the intersectionality of identities is needed (Breslin, Pandey and Riccucci, 2017).

Conclusion

The paper collated and analyzed secondary data outlining patterns of gender inequality within public administrations. Despite years of gender equality legislation and policies, particularly in liberal democracies, there remains persistent gender discrimination and occupational segregation. Moreover, the data belies egregious outcomes for women as employees and as recipients of public services.

The paper also reviewed literature and extant research, which showed the beneficial outcomes of a representative bureaucracy for public sector performance, trust and legitimacy. Although the benefits of representative bureaucracy have been demonstrated by extant research, the dominant masculine paradigm in public administration mitigates these gains. As Meier (2018) argues representative bureaucracies could be a solution to improve the overall performance of public administrations. A research agenda was therefore suggested as ways to improve representation in public administration, providing opportunities to exchange knowledge of better practices with improving performance through representative public value.

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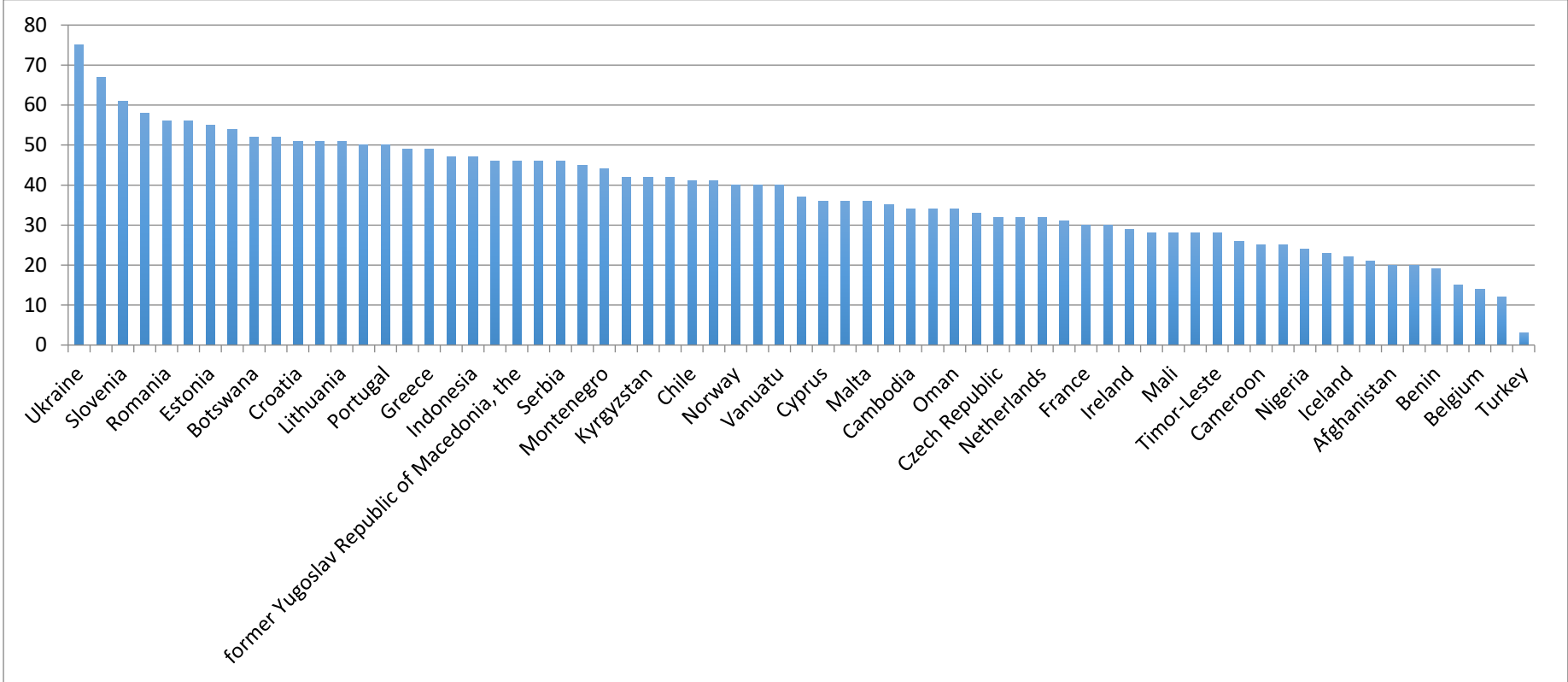
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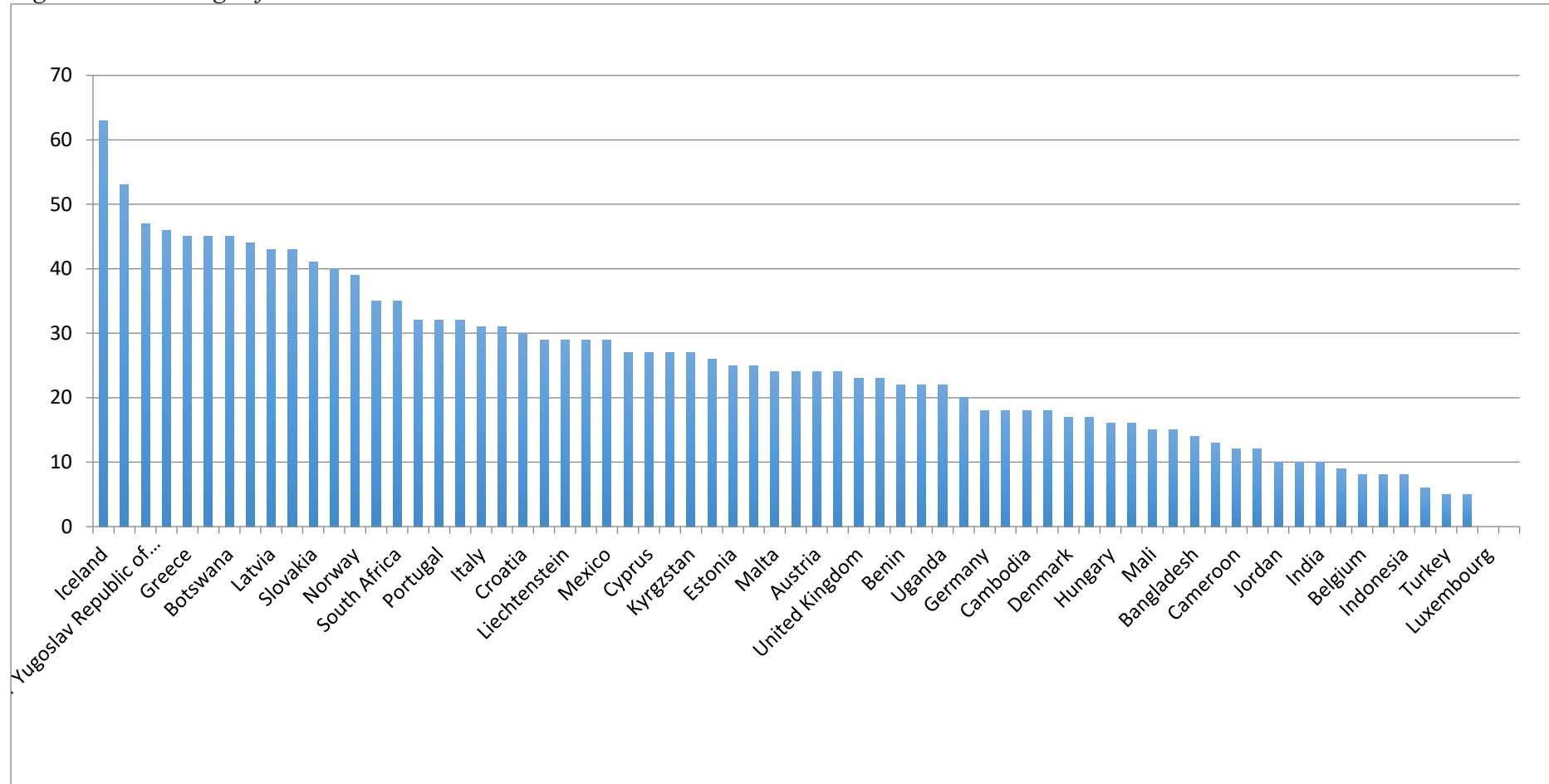
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Figure 1: Percentage of Female Representation in Public Administrations (2010 – 2015)



Sources: Ernst & Young (2013); European Commission (2016); UNDP (2014)

Figure 2: Percentage of Female Public Administration Leaders



Sources: Ernst & Young (2013); European Commission (2016); UNDP (2014)

Table 1: Gender Representation in UK Public Sector (2015)

Public sector employment by gender: Headcount		
Male	Female	Total
1,722	3,637	5,359
32%	68%	
Part time public sector employment by gender: Headcount¹		
Male	Female	Total
244	1,874	2,118
12%	88%	

1: Public Sector Employment Survey: part time is defined as working less than the organisation's normal weekly hours.

Source: Office for National Statistics (2018)

Table 2: Gender Representation of UK Civil Service (2017)

	Senior Civil Service Level			Grade 6 and 7			Senior and Higher Executive Officers			Executive Officers			Administrative Officers and Assistants			Total	% Female
	Male	Female	% Female	Male	Female	% Female	Male	Female	% Female	Male	Female	% Female	Male	Female	% Female		
Attorney General's Departments	120	120	50%													241	50%
Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	200	160	44%													360	44%
Cabinet Office	110	80	42%													190	42%
Other Cabinet Office agencies	60	50	45%	120	110	48%	140	180	56%	50	70	58%	20	30	60%	832	53%
Chancellor's other departments	40	20	33%	50	50	50%	80	60	43%	30	20	40%	0	10	100%	362	44%

Charity Commission	0	0	0%	20	20	50%	80	80	50%	30	50	63%	10	10	50%	302	53%
Communities and Local Government	50	40	44%	450	360	44%	370	380	51%	160	170	52%	100	130	57%	2,212	49%
Culture, Media and Sport	20	30	60%	120	130	52%	100	130	57%	50	60	55%	0	10	100%	652	55%
Defence	280	90	24%	3,420	1,430	29%	11,660	6,640	36%	5,570	3,880	41%	10,890	8,010	42%	51,871	39%
Department for Exiting the EU	20	10	33%	40	50	56%	30	30	50%	10	20	67%	..	..		212	52%
Department for International Trade	50	40	44%	230	160	41%	250	160	39%	80	70	47%	20	30	60%	1,092	42%
Education	80	120	60%	780	960	55%	890	1,330	60%	400	600	60%	60	130	68%	5,352	59%
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	60	50	45%	560	420	43%	1,240	1,250	50%	670	870	56%	610	1,100	64%	6,832	54%
ESTYN	..	..		40	30	43%	..	10		10	10	50%	..	10		111	54%
Food Standards Agency	10	10	50%	80	60	43%	200	190	49%	410	80	16%	10	20	67%	1,072	34%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	290	120	29%	850	540	39%	1,290	760	37%	440	450	51%	280	370	57%	5,392	42%
Health	350	360	51%	960	1,350	58%	1,020	1,870	65%	300	820	73%	260	700	73%	7,992	64%
HM Revenue and Customs	210	160	43%	3,180	2,410	43%	9,610	8,710	48%	7,300	9,610	57%	10,820	18,330	63%	70,342	56%
HM Treasury	70	40	36%	350	270	44%	450	380	46%	60	120	67%	30	30	50%	1,802	47%
Home Office	140	80	36%	1,140	960	46%	3,190	3,100	49%	5,930	5,800	49%	3,090	4,680	60%	28,112	52%

International Development	50	40	44%	560	660	54%	250	350	58%	70	140	67%	50	60	55%	2,232	56%
Justice	150	120	44%	1,010	1,000	50%	4,340	5,040	54%	5,200	4,510	46%	18,100	18,150	50%	57,622	50%
The National Archives	..	..		30	30	50%	130	150	54%	60	60	50%	80	50	38%	592	49%
National Crime Agency	30	10	25%	200	80	29%	1,170	570	33%	1,190	850	42%	140	210	60%	4,451	39%
Northern Ireland Office	10	10	50%	10	10	50%	10	30	75%	10	10	50%	..	10		112	62%
Office for Standards in Education	20	10	33%	240	290	55%	150	380	72%	80	120	60%	80	160	67%	1,532	63%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets	30	20	40%	200	160	44%	140	130	48%	80	90	53%	20	20	50%	892	47%
Office of Rail and Road	10	10	50%	110	40	27%	40	40	50%	10	10	50%	10	10	50%	292	38%
Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation	10	10	50%	30	40	57%	30	60	67%	10	10	50%	..	..		202	59%
Office of Water Services	10	10	50%	20	20	50%	50	50	50%	10	20	67%	..	..		192	52%
Scotland Office	10	10	50%	20	30	60%	20	10	33%	..	10		10	10	50%	131	53%
Scottish Government	110	80	42%	960	1,010	51%	2,570	2,470	49%	2,600	1,770	41%	2,450	3,020	55%	17,042	49%
Transport	100	60	38%	830	420	34%	1,770	1,050	37%	2,700	1,330	33%	2,430	3,520	59%	14,211	45%

UK Statistics Authority	40	10	20%	300	230	43%	540	690	56%	210	390	65%	730	920	56%	4,062	55%
UK Export Finance	10	..		50	20	29%	90	40	31%	10	20	67%	10	20	67%	271	37%
UK Supreme Court	..	0		..	..		10	10	50%	..	10		..	..		31	66%
Wales Office	..	0		..	10		10	10	50%	..	..		..	..		31	66%
Welsh Government	90	60	40%	470	430	48%	960	1,560	62%	400	590	60%	310	530	63%	5,402	59%
Work and Pensions	140	90	39%	1,510	1,290	46%	4,260	6,210	59%	12,190	26,230	68%	10,730	24,110	69%	86,762	67%
All employee	3,000	2,100	41%	22,570	18,800	45%	51,000	47,850	48%	48,310	62,460	56%	62,690	86,860	58%	405,642	54%

Source: raw data from Office of National Statistics (2018), calculations by author