

## Diversifying Representation: Tempering Expectations for Change beyond the Legislature

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Male dominance in public life is declining. As women and other historically-marginalized groups gain access to political and public power, observers and scholars have used Hanna Pitkin's concepts of representation to ask three central questions: What explains patterns of women's representation in high office (descriptive representation)? How does women's presence affect citizens' reactions to and conceptions of the offices (symbolic representation)? Do women change outcomes (substantive representation)?

This paper responds to new global trends in the diversification of leadership beyond the legislature, using the lens of feminist institutionalism to explore the causes and consequences of women's entrance into executives, judiciaries, and corporate boards. We return to Pitkin's neglected dimension of formal representation, which we operationalize as the written and unwritten institutional rules that shapes officeholders' powers (authorization) and selection (accountability). This approach allows us to ask whether descriptive, symbolic, and substantive representation indeed "work" beyond the legislature—and we find reasons for skepticism.

We conclude that institutional design interacts with gendered roles and norms, constraining the powers and possibilities of some officeholders. Specifically, cabinet ministers, high court judges, and board directors do not undertake interest representation in the conventional sense. Descriptive representation remains a useful concept for explaining women's underrepresentation in high office, but symbolic and substantive representation should be deployed cautiously. Carefully matching expectations of representational outcomes to the constraints and possibilities of the office is essential, else female leaders will be seen as having failed when their access to power does not yield rapid, transformative changes.