Gender Quotas in South Africa

Addressing women's descriptive political representation through an intersectional analysis

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Abstract

This research is an attempt to critically re-examine the effects of gender quotas on women's descriptive representation in South Africa. South Africa has been internationally acclaimed as one of the success stories in bringing more women into parliament trough the introduction of a gender quota. However, the quota in place has been introduced by a single, dominant political party, the African National Congress (ANC), and is voluntary by nature. Given these contextual factors previous research has outlined issues of miss usage of the quota. The ANC has been depicted to use the quota as a political tool to gain legitimacy among voters while disregarding broader gender mainstreaming agenda. This has led to an increasing homogenization of the representatives elected through the quota based on ideological, regional and class divide.

Based on these contextual factors and outlined political discourses from previous research, my thesis works as a theory-testing exercise to analyse what intersectional theory can tell about the case of the ANC gender quota. Through a descriptive analysis of female representatives' intersectional characteristics, patterns of political privilege and disadvantage and contextual factors affecting these patterns I have been able to interrogate the complexities associated with gender quotas. My findings point out to a significant numerical empowerment of educated, politically engaged black women. However, the ANC gender quota has failed to account to an intersectional diversity of the representatives, which places the quota under a new level of criticism.

Key words: *Gender Quotas, South Africa, Descriptive Representation, ANC, Intersectionality*
Words: 10 020

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List of Abbreviations

ANC	The African National Congress
ANCWL	ANC Women's League
CSM	Civil society movement
MP	Member of Parliament
PR	Proportional Representation
VPQ	Voluntary Party Quota
WNC	Women's National Coalition

1. Introduction

The purpose of this research is to analyse the impact of the South African parliamentary gender quota on women's descriptive representation. The case of South Africa is a successful example of how quotas can significantly increase the numerical representation of women in the legislature. However, little attention has been paid on the intersection of representatives' characteristics when it comes to quotas. This research seeks to take a next step forward in analysing women's descriptive (i.e. numerical) representation by introducing a critical intersectional approach to the study of descriptive representation. By being attentive to the intersections of political privilege and disadvantage, as well as the contextual inequalities underlying these patterns of descriptive representation, my thesis will shed light on the complexities of political representation produced by gender quotas. I am positioning my thesis within the camp of critical feminist representation scholars by arguing that women cannot be regarded as a unitary interest group and hence, I call for a new approach to study women's numerical representation in South Africa which acknowledges the diversities of women's interests. In this section, I will introduce the purpose and specific aims in a closer detail and lay a historical and empirical foundation for my research.

1.1   Background

Global institutional platform has for many decades been concerned about women's low representation in national political structures. Traditionally, emphasis has been given on women's individual characteristics in undermining and explaining women's absence from political structures (Geisler, 2004:33). More recent institutional discourse has moved away from individual explanations towards looking into the structural factors undermining women's political representation (Ibid.). *A Platform For Action*, established in the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 has been a foundational platform for changing this political discourse by addressing structural inequalities undermining and hindering women's political representation (Childs & Lovenduski, 2013; Ballington, 2014:24; Dahlerup, 2006:4-6). The platform brings

attention to the importance of gender equal representation and calls for affirmative government action to tackle existing inequalities.

Different civil society organisations have appealed to the Platform to legitimise their claims for greater women's political representation. Over the past two decades, a mixture of top-down pressure from the global institutional platform and bottom-up response to these claims has been transferred into affirmative governmental actions towards increasing women's representation in the national legislatures around the world (Geisler, 2004:33-38; Tripp et al, 2006:113-119). Governmental action has taken a form of various gender quota policies ranging from mandatory, legislative quotas to voluntary party-based quotas.

Essentially, gender quotas can be defined as institutional forms of affirmative action towards addressing exiting structural inequalities that undermine women's political representation (Krook, 2014). Gender quotas refer to 'fast-track' models to equal political representation that emanate from growing impatience on the slow pace of change in women's political power (Dahlerup, 2006:6). The fast-track discourse rejects an idea of a gradual improvement in women's political representation, often associated as the 'Nordic model' or 'incremental model', and identifies exclusion and discrimination as core problems to women's low representation (Ibid.:8). As a result, varying forms of legally mandated and voluntary gender quota policies have taken place with the objective of fast-tracking women's numerical and substantive political representation (Dahlerup et al, 2013:23-27). These policies are aimed at reaching a certain percentage of female representatives, most commonly 30% or 50% mark, which is hoped to trickle down to gender sensitive policies and women's increased voice in the parliament.

Initially, gender quota policies were associated with liberal feminist discourses concerned with women's greater political presence, i.e. *the equality of opportunity*, incentivised by governmental quest to confer legitimacy on political institutions (Dahlerup, 2007). Critical feminist scholars and women's organisations have attempted to move away from democratic legitimacy narratives towards focusing on social justice and the representation of differing experiences and interests that should be accounted for in the political system and work as a centrepiece of quota policies (Ibid.). Furthermore, additional pressure has been weighed on a newer, critical discourse that reflects the need for *an equality of outcome*, referring to women's equal political participation and voice (Krook, 2014).

Gender quotas have been instrumental tools in fast-tracking women's parliamentary presence in the global south. South Africa, which is the specified focus area of this research, has embraced gender quotas in a form of voluntary party quota (VPQ) system for the past 24 years (Geisler, 2004:33, Dahlerup et al, 2013:175). The country's leading political party, the African National Congress (ANC), introduced a VPQ system during the country's first democratic general elections in 1994 as a response to ongoing pressure from Women's National Coalition (WNC), a unified women's movement dedicated for pushing gender mainstreaming agenda into the new democratic parliament (Geisler, 2004:136; Goetz & Hassim, 2003; Meintjes, 2005). South Africa is often considered as one of the rare success stories where women organised as women have had a pivotal role in the negotiations of a new political system (Waylen, 2007). Today, the country is close to gender parity in its parliamentary and ministerial positions most notably due to the ANC party quota (Bauer, 2007). Up to date, the ANC remains the only political party in South Africa dedicated to increasing women's parliamentary presence through quotas.

The unique historical and structural conditions of South Africa have directed scholarly interests towards assessing the effects of the VPQ system in diverse ways. Early research focused on discovering institutional processes that lead to the introduction of quotas and the implications they had on women's descriptive representation. In the past two decades, most researchers have moved beyond studying women's descriptive (numerical) representation towards substantive representation, i.e. the effects beyond numbers (Krook, 2014; Taylor-Robinson, 2014). Researchers have identified an increasing party centralisation within the ANC, which problematizes the effectiveness of quotas in improving women's voice in the parliament (Hassim, 2005; Wahls, 2012). Additionally, the gender mainstreaming agenda which was strongly present during the first democratic parliament has been depicted to be repressed as a result of the changing political discourse, hence narrowing the space for women to express their interests (People's Assembly, 2014).

The South African quota regime grants expansive power into the hands of political parties in determining the composition of the legislators and excessing a gatekeeping power over who will be represented (Hassim, 2005). The concept of quota regime refers to a combination of the electoral system in place and the type of quota adopted (Dahlerup, 2007). In the case of South Africa, this consists of a closed list proportional representation (PR) system where the electorate vote for political parties instead of individual politicians and the single VPQ which allows the ANC to choose over its representatives in a manner most suited to its party discourse and ideology (Bauer,

2007). The ANC has been criticised for exploiting this power by nominating an ideologically narrow set of female politicians under quotas whilst seemingly maintaining the status of gender mainstreaming (Walsh, 2012). The increasing centralisation of the ANC has been transferred into prioritised professionalism and loyalism of women MPs, while the ideological, class and regional composition of women has become increasingly narrowed (Walsh, 2012; Hassim, 2006; Geisler, 2000).

While the issue of party centralisation has been broadly interrogated topic among quota scholars, no systematic research up to date has been established about the effects of quotas on the intersecting inequalities and characteristics of the ANC women. Additionally, previous research has explicitly focused on the first (1995-1999) and the second (1999-2005) democratic parliament, while more contemporary research on representatives' descriptive diversity remains unexplored. It is within the historical context of shrinking women's voice (substantive representation), legislative diversity (descriptive representation) and changing political rhetoric that the ANC gender quota requires a more contemporary reanalysis.

1.2   Purpose and specific aims

Building on the work of earlier scholars, this research aims to reintroduce women's descriptive representation back to the discourse of quota studies in South Africa. In the case of South Africa, quotas have had a remarkably positive impact on women's descriptive representation when looking into the numerical effects on increased women's political presence (Bauer, 2007). However, the problem when focusing on gender and sex only is that multidimensional features of women's identity and interests can easily be overlooked (Kuperberg & Norris, 2017). As suggested by the previous academic research on the ANC quota, the changing political discourse is having a detrimental effect on the diversity of women's descriptive representation. Given the increasing party centralisation and the exploitation of the quota system by the ANC (see previous chapter) I propose that the ANC VPQ system needs a critical reanalysis.

It is within the context of unidimensional descriptive success and changing political landscape that I am introducing a research on the intersectional dimensions of women's descriptive representation. My research is concerned about which women get elected into the parliament through quotas and

seeks to identify intersecting political cleavages through the analysis of political representation. Analysis on the kinds of women elected through quotas is central to the evaluation of the effectiveness of quotas in promoting intersectional diversity among the women elected (Franceschet et al, 2012) and will help to identify patterns of privilege and disadvantage produced by quotas. I will be focusing explicitly on national level politics and delimiting my study to the National Assembly, which is the lower house of the parliament responsible of passing legislation, overseeing executive action, choosing the President and providing a national forum for public issues (People's Assembly, 2014; Ferree, 2017). The National Assembly consists of 400 representatives out of which 121 spots are currently occupied by women elected under the ANC VPQ system (Ibid.). As the ANC is currently the only party which has implemented a VPQ my research will be limited to study the female representatives, or 'quota women', of the ANC.

My research studies the current, fifth democratic parliament (2014-) with the specific focus on the ANC women. By delimiting the study to the current administration my research will introduce a missing, contemporary aspect of quota studies to the South African context and examine the current state of political representation. I argue that it is crucial to take a critical look into the ways in which intersecting social cleavages play a role in women's political representation. In a socially diverse country, where pronounced racial and class inequalities are deeply embedded in the society, there is a considerable need for research that investigates how intersecting inequalities play a role in the outcomes of quotas. Furthermore, this research is an attempt to move beyond the unitary analysis of women's descriptive representation often associated with descriptive quota studies. By adopting a critical feminist approach to the study of descriptive representation, this research extends the analysis into the intersecting dimensions of political representation.

In order to conduct a systematic research on the intersecting characteristics of female members of parliament (MPs) and to interrogate the effects of increased party centralisation on representation inequalities of women MPs, three research questions have been identified:

- *What characteristics do women MPs elected under the ANC gender quota possess?*

- *Who is being privileged in and disadvantaged from the political system?*
- *What structural and agency-based factors affect women's descriptive representation?*

The first question seeks to describe the intersecting characteristics of women MPs in a systematic, detailed manner, and will be used as a reference point to the latter, more interpretive questions which comprises the analytical part of this research. The first question will be addressed through descriptive statistics produced by using primary data while the second and third questions will make use of these statistics with the combination of secondary material to produce a detailed description of the case. The aim of these two, more analytical questions, is to produce a thorough description of the underlying patterns of political privilege and disadvantage embedded in women's descriptive representation and interpret these findings through structural and agency-based factors underpinning the depicted discourses of political representation. These points will be further elaborated on the 3rd, methodological section of the thesis. By addressing these three interlinked questions, my research will produce a clear description of the current status of the ANC women's descriptive representation.

2.Theoretical framework

This section of the thesis is dedicated to building a theoretical framework which will be utilised to analyse the previously outlined research questions. My theoretical framework consists of four main concepts: *descriptive representation*, *intersectionality, equality of opportunity* and the concept of *gatekeeping*. I will start the theoretical discussion by introducing the concept of descriptive representation which will work as a theoretical foundation for my framework. Furthering the discussion, I will examine the ways in which the concepts of intersectionality, equality of opportunity and the concept of gatekeeping can be integrated and contribute to the theoretical framework to produce a distinct analytical tool for my analysis. Finally, I will provide my personal normative standpoint through which this research will approach gender quotas.

2.1   Descriptive representation

This research bases its theoretical foundations on Hanna Pitkin's (1967) seminal work on political representation. Pitkin conceptualises descriptive representation as 'standing for' constituents possessing similar attributes to those of the representatives, mirroring the social contours of the society (Pitkin, 1967:60-91). Descriptive representation is interested in the numeric presence of MPs in legislative bodies and interrogates politically relevant characteristics of the representatives. To put in other words, descriptive representation as 'standing for' is a question of contextually and politically relevant characteristics of the representatives. Pitkin denotes that ideal descriptive representation happens when the composition of the legislators corresponds to that of the whole nation, i.e. represents the demographics of a given country (Ibid.:60).

When applied to the study of gender quotas, legislators' sex becomes a category of political relevance, rendering the need for an equal representation between sexes that mirrors the social composition of the society (Franceschet & Piscopo, 2012). Examination of women's descriptive representation through the analytical lens outlined by Pitkin would produce a positive result for the case of South Africa, as the country is one of the most prominent success stories in bringing high numbers of women into the parliament (Bauer, 2007). However, as this research is interested in introducing new categories of political relevance and interrogating intersectional characteristics of representation, I have to move beyond the unitary analysis of legislators' sex and expand the theoretical framework into the field of intersectional feminism.

2.2   Intersectionality

Anne Phillips (1998), another distinguished scholar within the field of political representation has taken a step forward from Pitkin's (1967) analysis by incorporating a gender element into the analysis of political representation. She argues that quota policies depend on an idea that interests are gendered, yet not unitary, and hence women need to be incorporated into the legislative bodies (Phillips, 1998). Her argument supports two central standpoints proposed by critical feminist

representation scholars:

1) Women's interests are fundamentally different from that of men given the unique structural inequalities women face in their everyday lives
2) Gender as a category of political representation should not be treated in isolation of other, intersecting features of identity

When applied to quotas, intersectionality recognises that gender represents only a part of persons complex identity and cannot be regarded in isolation from other intervening categories (Kuperberg & Norris, 2017). As intersectional research is concerned with contextually relevant categories of identity (Hancock, 2007), the analysis of this research unfolds to scrutinise the diversity of women's interests based on class, race and political ideology as distinct, multidimensional categories that intersect with the representatives' sex.

2.2.1 Representation inequality

Drawing on the above-discussed dimensions of political representation, this research adopts an intersectional framework of analysis into the study of women's descriptive representation. Intersectionality as an analytical tool focuses on multidimensionality of human experience and weighs emphasis on the fluidity, interrelationship and coproduction of various categories and systems of power that women are subject to in their everyday lives (Collins, 1993). On a more aggregate level, intersectionality is a term that can be applied to understand different dimensions of inequalities including race, class, gender and sexuality (Collins & Chepp, 2013).

Intersectional theory attempts to move beyond a singular emphasis on a given category of inequality, such as gender-based, or class-based inequality, towards considering different dimensions of identities as coinciding and interlinked categories producing multi-layered, mutually inclusive, fluid and contextually specific inequalities (Hancock, 2007). Hence, one of the greatest contributions of intersectionality to the feminist theory is an understanding that inequalities can be additive and exist in a parallel manner, causing complex, multi-layered positions of subordination among women. By adopting a multidimensional understanding of inequality, intersectional research seeks to address contemporary questions that depict flaws in one-dimensional understandings of

identities (Kuperberg & Norris, 2017).

2.2.2 Relational power

Atop of being concerned about studying representation inequalities, intersectional theory is interested in interrogating the ways in which political representation creates and/or recreates positions of privilege and disadvantage. Intersectional theory is based on a relational conceptualisation of political power in which power relations are located within social interactions that are constructed in intersecting and coconstructive social systems and structures organised around power and inequality (Collins & Chepp, 2013; Celis et al, 2016). Given the public nature of political representations, these interactions engage themselves in broader levels of social interaction and have the power to promote change as much as reinforce existing power relations in the society (Ibid.)

Intersectional theory conceptualises the relationship between political representation and power in terms of *constitution* of power that (re)shapes positions of privilege and disadvantage while rejecting reductionist treatment of power as an exercise of oppression (Celis et al, 2016). The word constitution reflects a process-oriented approach to power where the production of privileges and disadvantages of political representation are a result of dynamic and unstable dual interaction between human agency and social structures (Ibid.). The treatment of power in terms of constitution places intersectional theory in a distinct ontological position where representation inequalities are not only viewed as *outcomes* of societal power struggles, but rather reflected in broader terms of social interaction that (re)create and (re)shape the meaning and character of positions of marginalisation and privilege. In a way, intersectionality attempts to move beyond deterministic assumptions of stable structural explanations towards considering a two-folded approach of human agency and structure to representation inequalities (Ibid.).

What the relational understanding of power can contribute to my study of descriptive representation is to move beyond making reductionist inferences of varying features of women's representation inequalities to supposedly stable power structures and instead, consider the dynamics of interaction between human agency and social structures. This means not only looking into intersectional inequalities embedded in broader societal structures, but understanding the role political agency

plays in shaping women's positions in the legislature. By adopting the ontological standpoint of relational power this research acknowledges the complexities of representation inequality that are increasingly salient in the unique institutional environment of South African politics. Additionally, the concept of relational power helps to stay sensitive to the changing, unstable nature of political power structures and understand mechanisms of political behaviour, such as chance, habit and actors' intentionality that underpin representation inequalities (Celis et al, 2016).

2.3   The equality of opportunity

Gender quotas can be identified as specific forms of gender mainstreaming policy in an institutional platform with a central focus on the concept of equality. In many cases, quotas have reoriented the concept of gender equality from a formalistic understanding of equality before law towards equality of opportunities and outcomes (Meier & Lombardo, 2013). Additionally, quotas have been instrumental in incorporating a gender perspective into the understanding of inequalities in the mainstream political arena (Ibid.). Gender scholars have identified two concepts of equality that are of explicit interest for gender mainstreaming within quotas: *equality of opportunity* and *equality of outcome*. As this research is concerned with descriptive representation which closely aligns with the concept of equality of opportunity, it will be further elaborated upon on this section of the theoretical framework while setting aside the concept of equality of outcome associated more closely with women's substantive representation.

Equality of opportunity refers to the recruitment and selection procedures that ensure equal political opportunities for women, something gender quotas aim to directly intervene with (Meier & Lombardo, 2013). As understood through feminist arguments embedded in quota policy, equality of opportunity refers to the removal of differentiating barriers women face to the process of electoral competition (Dahlerup, 2007; Childs & Lovenduski, 2013). Feminist arguments rest on the notion that political opportunities for men and women are inherently unequal, leading to unequal opportunity structures that require to be corrected through structural changes (Dahlerup, 2007).

Even though gender quotas have shifted the emphasis from formalistic understanding of equality towards a broader consideration of equalities of opportunity and outcome, they do not challenge an inherent gender binary in the understanding of equality. Gender quotas have the potential to

instigate broader discussion and understanding of disadvantage and privilege with the incorporation of a broader approach of intersectional understanding for the concept of equality. However, the concept of equality of opportunity requires critical examination through intersecting characteristics of privilege and disadvantage in order to uncover non-essentialised understandings of equality structures that women face in politics.

2.3.1 Normative standpoint

This research draws on the ideas of critical feminist representation scholars within quota studies by arguing that political institutions, both formal and informal, are inherently unequal (Dahlerup, 2007; Childs & Lovenduski, 2013). Based on historical male domination and masculinisation of the political sphere, political institutions are deeply enrooted in patriarchal norms and customs. Hence, gender quotas can be justified as measures of structural adjustments to improve the *equality of opportunity* for women. Additionally, this research pays emphasis on the critical positioning of women as a heterogeneous group with diversified political interests and identities that need to be regarded and reflected upon through the critical lens of intersectionality outlined throughout this section.

2.4   The concept of gatekeeping

My research departs from the idea that political parties work as 'gatekeepers' when it comes to nominations and elections of legislators. As this research is concerned with analysing the impact of *a voluntary party quota* on women's descriptive representation, it is important to take a look at the unique position political parties are subjected to when adopting such measures. The introduction of gender quotas, specifically in the South African quota regime, goes to the core of the close interplay between voters, parties and representatives (Dahlerup, 2006:10).

A proportional representation system with the combination of a voluntary party quota is often considered the most successful quota regime in bringing more women into parliament, i.e. having the highest success rate in terms of women's descriptive representation (Bauer, 2007; Dahlerup,

2007). However, VPQs do not position political parties as liable to the nomination of more women, as these types of quotas are essentially voluntary in nature. As gatekeepers, political parties have the power to nominate more women into electoral positions and, consequently, can positively improve the underrepresentation of women in the parliament (Dahlerup, 2007).

In PR systems, the voters have a power to cast their vote on a party they deem most equipped to represent their interests. However, the fundamental power of deciding who will be represented is left at the hands of the political parties (Ferree, 2017). There is a tremendous responsibility and high risk of ill-discipline associated with having to rely on the compliance of political parties in improving the equality of representation outcomes. An additional element of complexity is introduced when considering the behaviour of the representatives in a PR system with voluntary party quotas in place. Women MPs elected through VPQs are often depicted to be more liable for the political parties than towards their constituents when it comes to political representation (Geisler, 2004: 189; Walsh, 2012). This can emanate from strong party discipline and/or the feeling of accountability women have towards the parties given their sovereign position in electoral politics.

Through the restructuring of voter – party – representative relationship, VPQs intervene electoral politics in a unique manner that positions political parties to the centrepiece of power in gatekeeping. Parties have the power to promote and/or disadvantage certain groups from the elected positions, or in the most ideal case, include diverse interests into the positions of political power. This unique position of political parties deserves a central focus in the analysis of the outcomes of quotas alike. Given their special position in electoral politics of quota studies, this research weighs emphasis on the power of gatekeeping political parties possess and their decisive role in promoting or disadvantaging underrepresented groups in politics (Dahlerup, 2007).

The next, third section of my thesis comprises the methodological component of my research. I will introduce each methodological section the research has employed in preparation for the analysis of my research findings. The section is divided into four distinct subsections: 1) research methodology, 2) coding strategy, 3) operationalisation of key concepts, and 4) the usage of intersectionality as an analytical tool. Additionally, I will elaborate on the limitations of my research design.

3. Methodology

This research uses a quantitative research design with a descriptive approach to the study of political representation. I will combine quantitative coding techniques producing descriptive statistics together with a more interpretive analysis of these statistics. In this section, I will outline the main methodological components in a closer detail.

3.1 Descriptive research

Descriptive research seeks to explore a singular event or a case in a detailed manner and is often considered a preceding feature to explanatory research (de Vaus, 2001:2). Descriptive research is interested in describing the social realities we live in in a meaningful way. Good descriptions help us to get an overview of a specific case in question and pave the way for future research (Halperin & Heath, 2012:363). Additionally, accurate descriptions have the power to challenge existing ways of analysis and provoke further action (de Vaus, 2001:2). As a more contemporary research on South African quota system remains an unexplored terrain, a descriptive research holds important value in describing the current state of women's political representation in the country's legislature. Furthermore, as I am introducing a new analytical angle into the study of quotas in South Africa, a thorough description of the case is required in order to lay a foundation for more explanatory oriented studies of intersectionality and political representation in the future.

3.1.1. Limitations

Descriptive research is generally not ideal for explaining *why* or *how* something happens, i.e. cannot be considered a methodologically sound approach to more explanatory oriented research (Halperin & Heath, 2012:363). But as this research is more interested in describing the outcome of the ANC gender quota on women's descriptive representation rather than approaching the study in a more explanatory manner, a descriptive analysis can be considered to be the most fitting approach to the research problem.

3.1.2 Descriptive analysis

A central element of quantitative, descriptive research analysis is the production of descriptive statistics. The focus of my research analysis will be on summaries of nominal (non-orderly ranked) data through graphs and figures in a form of pie and bar charts as well as supporting frequency tables depending on the most fitted design to a given category (Halperin & Heath, 2012:370-372). The summaries of ordinal and scale (orderly ranked) data, on the other hand, will take a form of frequency tables and summaries of distribution in various forms most relevant to the data and research question (Ibid.:366-370). Additionally, this research will make use of secondary material to interpret the findings of these statistics by addressing my two latter, more interpretive research questions. These points will be further elaborated on the fourth part of my thesis which consists of the analytical component of my research.

3.2   Empirical material

The primary data used for the purpose of this research consists of structured biographies of women MPs from governmental and non-partisan webpages. Two of my sources are from official institutional platforms and one from an independent third party dedicated to gathering easily accessible information about South African decision makers to the public (see Appendix A, p.38). Additionally, some MPs have their own Wikipedia page where useful biographical information is easily accessible. In the cases of these few MPs, I will support my data by gathering information from Wikipedia pages alike. I make use of all of the above-listed sources containing similar types of content in order to increase the validity and accuracy of the information gathered and to minimise missing data. Additional secondary sources will be used for the purpose of interpretation of descriptive statistics produced by using the primary data. My secondary sources consist of academic journals, books and relevant websites engaged with politically relevant discussions.

3.2.1 Assessing the quality of documents

As the primary data used for this research is based on the combination of private and state documents, it is crucial to reflect on the quality of these documents for producing reliable statistics. This research uses four central criteria in order to assess the quality of the documents used. The criteria outlined as follows: 1. *Authenticity*, 2. *Credibility*, 3. *Representativeness,* and 4. *Meaning* (Bryman, 2012:544-554).

I am using textual material in a form of women MPs biographies deriving from state and private sources. The authenticity claims are strong in these type of documents as the origin of the information is clearly depicted. Additionally, the meaning, referring to the clarity and level of comprehensibility (Bryman, 2012:544) is equally clear in all of the documents used as the biographical information provided by these sources is highly structured and clear. However, issues with credibility and representativeness rise from the fact that the state and third parties can decide what type of biographical information they wish to provide of the representatives and what information to exclude from. This poses a risk of distortion of the information I have gathered, for instance of years of previous political experience, if the sources are not providing detailed background descriptions or are miss relevant information. In this sense, the issue of credibility and representativeness go hand in hand. If the sources cannot be regarded as credible, they run an additional risk of lacking representativeness of the information provided.

It is important to acknowledge the issues of representativeness and credibility when analysing textual material and the limitations these issues pose for the research findings. However, these concerns cannot be avoided when relying on data produced by external sources. As depicted in Bryman (2012:554-555), documents form their own, distinct reality where each piece of textual information is written with the objective of conveying a certain impression of the reality in a favourable fashion to those whom they represent. Being aware, transparent and reflective about the limitations and potential biases inherent in the sources used, the context in which they have been created and their implied readership will help to create more accurate and reliable research findings and improve the validity of the research (Bryman, 2012:555).

3.2.2 Missing data

Connected to the above-discussed issues of representativeness and credibility of textual material on a more aggregate level, there is a more specific issue of missing data in my research. The data available of each representative varies to some extent and some of the biographies lack information of the representatives' educational backgrounds (discussed further below). There is no clear or 'right' way to deal with missing data, and it has the potential of introducing a research error or bias to the findings (Halperin & Heath, 2012:366). I have decided to include the accessible information of the representatives' educational backgrounds in order to produce more nuanced descriptions of the biographical information of women MPs. I am attempting to tackle the issue of missing data by producing frequency tables that transparently indicate the frequency and percentages of missing values (Ibid.: 367). Frequency tables show both the total share of distribution and the valid percent of distribution of a given category, which excludes the missing values (Halperin & Heath, 2012:268). This way we can get an idea of the levels of education obtained by MPs with accessible data, as well as the total share of missing values. When interpreting the findings, it is however important to bear in mind the issues of research bias and representativeness and to avoid drawing straightforward conclusions out of the data.

3.3   Coding

The method of priori coding, also known as closed coding, is used to manage the primary data for this research. Priori coding refers to a clearly identified, pre-existing coding framework based on theory and previous research (Halperin & Heath, 2012: 323). In this sense, my research has a deductive approach to research and is theory-testing in nature (de Vaus, 2001:6). As I am dealing with highly structured batch of data with a predesigned research purpose and quantitative approach to data analysis, priori coding can be argued to be most fitted for my research purpose. Drawing on previous research and intersectional analysis, my coding framework consists of the following main categories: race, previous political experience, government position, organisational experience and/or activist background, education and personal interests/other.

3.3.1 Operationalisation of descriptive representation

This research operationalises the concept of descriptive representation by observing the intersectional characteristics of women MPs. Three significant analytical categories have been identified for the purpose of this research: race, class and ideological diversity. These three categories are central to intersectional analysis as they provide a description of socially relevant categories of inequality that exist parallel to representatives' sex (Collins & Chepp, 2013). To further clarify these categories, a person's race and class can be considered as potential categories of privilege and/or marginalisation while focus on ideological diversity has the potential to challenge the inherent gender binary in understanding equality often embedded in quota policy and left unchallenged by scholarly work (Hancock, 2007).

My coding framework helps me to identify the representatives' class status by analysing previous political experience and educational background while ideological diversity can be interrogated through the MPs organisational experience/activism, political experience and personal interests. Below, I will break down my analytical categories in a closer detail to further demonstrate what I will be looking into and how I have acquired statistical information from my primary sources:

Race – By looking into the representatives' race as a category of intersectional analysis, this research is able to describe the racial categories of privilege and disadvantage and interrogate the ways in which historically enrooted racial divisions and party ideology affect the racial diversity of quota policy.

Class – Tracing the representatives class background is a more ambiguous challenge to this research. I have coded the representatives' class based on the MPs educational and political background. What I am interested in looking into is the highest level of education obtained and years of previous political experience in organisational and governmental structures. Together these two variables will paint a picture of the level of 'elitism' and professionalism possessed by the representatives and give interesting insights to the patterns of privilege and disadvantage of political representation.

Ideology – I will study the MPs ideological diversity by looking into the representatives' personal political interests derived from the following categories of my coding framework: organisational experience/activist background, political experience and personal interests. What I have looked into is the type of organisational/political/activism work the MPs are associated with and their personal interests, if specified. Based on the information gathered, I have defined 11 different categories of political interest I will present in the data analysis section of my thesis.

Atop of gathering information about the representatives' political interests I have produced a separate frequency table of the MPs activist backgrounds, also presented in the next, analytical section of my thesis. I am especially interested in finding patterns of activism within women's movements, most notably the ANC Women's League (ANCWL), prior to the democratisation processes in 1994. I will also look into the number of terms served in the parliament to trace patterns of potential ideological loyalty to the current administration. To further elaborate to this point, it is within the premises of ongoing political centralisation and weakening of gender mainstreaming strategies that I find it important to analyse whether women who have served in the first democratic parliament often depicted as the most progressive in terms of gender mainstreaming (Walsh, 2012), are still serving as MPs for the ANC. Additionally, analysing the number of terms served will reveal patterns of recruitment and whether they go hand in hand with the shift of political leadership. This will provide additional information about the discourses of narrowing political ideologies among the representatives elected under quotas.

3.4   Intersectionality as an analytical tool

Intersectionality comprises an analytical strategy which weighs emphasis on the multidimensionality of human experience that coincides with intersecting categories of inequality (Collins & Chepp, 2013). This research uses the theory of intersectionality to derive meaning from the observed data and interprets it within a larger context of structural and agency based factors that may not be directly observable in the data. In this way, intersectionality works as a tool to interrogate the "black box" of interaction between individual and institutional factors (Hancock, 2007).

The ability of intersectionality to draw attention to multidimensional locations of inequality challenges the binary thinking of political inequalities embedded in quota policies (Hancock, 2007). In this way, intersectionality has the potential to include previously overlooked subgroups and considerations of inequality to the study of women's descriptive representation (Celis et al, 2016). In essence, intersectionality as an analytical tool works as a 'policy check' by moving beyond the representatives' sex to interrogate multidimensional positions of disadvantage and privilege of the 121 women elected under the ANC quota. Generally, intersectional research is open to multiple research methods given its diverse applicability to various research problems (Hancock, 2007). The focus of this research will remain in the description of the case, focusing on *what type of* women get elected, *who* is being privileged in and disadvantaged from the political system and *what* contextual factors explain these patterns. In the next section of my thesis I will introduce the analytical component of this research with the focus on the description of the research aims outlined above.

4. Analysis

I will start the analytical section of my thesis by presenting the descriptive statistics I have produced to address my first research question "*What characteristics do women MPs elected under the ANC gender quota possess?*". This will be followed by a more interpretive part of the analysis where I will address my two, more analytical research questions: "*Who is being privileged in and disadvantaged from the political system?*" and "*What structural and agency-based factors affect women's descriptive representation?*". I will make use of secondary literature in the interpretive discussion of these questions while utilising my theoretical framework as a reference point for the analysis.

4.1   Intersectional characteristics of women MPs

As presented above, I will start my analytical section by addressing my first research question with the focus on following analytical categories: the representatives' racial background, class status and
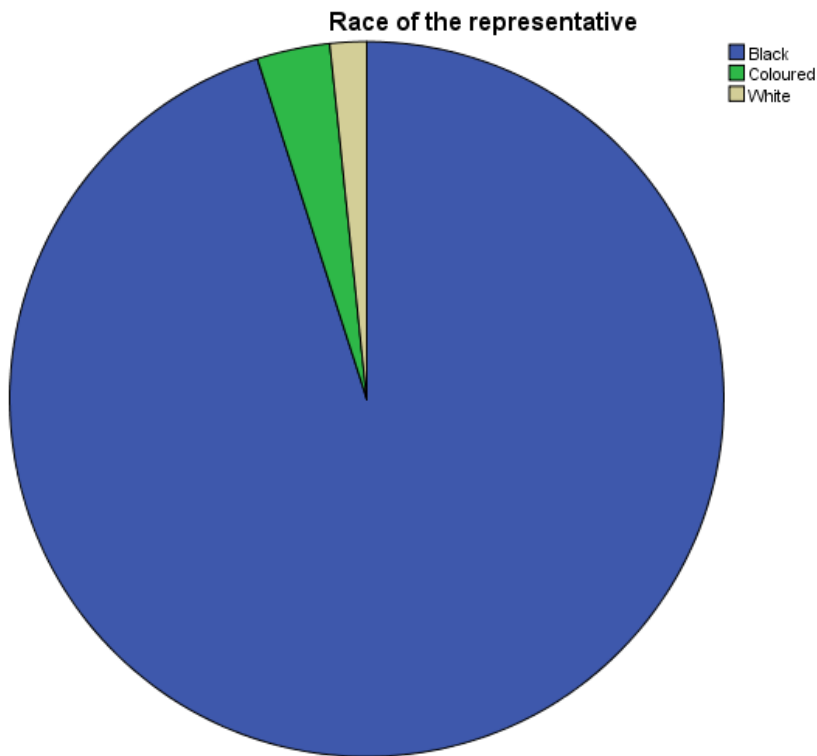
ideological diversity.

4.1.1. Representatives' racial background

Race of the representative

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Black	115	95,0	95,0	95,0
	Coloured	4	3,3	3,3	98,3
	White	2	1,7	1,7	100,0
	Total	121	100,0	100,0	

The representatives' race is a nominal variable, meaning that it cannot be orderly ranked but instead, vary in *kind* rather than *degree* (Bryman, 2012:335; Punch, 2014:228). For this reason, an ideal way of presenting nominal statistics is through frequency tables as well as through bar or pie charts (Halperin & Heath, 2012:370). Based on the frequency table provided above we can observe a strong racial concentration of black female representatives within the ANC. A frequency table provides the number of people as well as the percentage of each category for the variable in question (Bryman, 2012:337). Frequency distribution, which describes the total distribution and summarises the number of cases for each code (Halperin & Heath, 2012:366) gives an idea of total numbers of female representatives in each racial category, which accounts for 115 black, 4 coloured and 2 white representatives. Alternatively, we can observe the share of percentages, in which case 95,0% of all ANC women MPs are black, 3,3% coloured and 1,7% white.

Race of the representative

- Black
- Coloured
- White

The pie chart provided above gives an accurate visualisation of the frequency distribution and percentages presented in the frequency table. Two interesting observations can be made out of these statistics. Firstly, the ANC prides itself as an inclusive, transformational political party with a strong post-apartheid unification rhetoric (ANC, 2014; Ranchod, 2016). However, the women MPs elected under the ANC quota prove to be from highly homogenous racial backgrounds. Secondly, in the socio-historical context of racial segregation, having large numbers of black female representatives (a historically disadvantaged group in political structures) numerically represented in the parliament is a significant political discourse in itself (SAHO, 2017). The implications of racial homogenisation will be further elaborated on points 4.2 and 4.3 where I will interpret the statistical findings through the concepts of political privilege and disadvantage, as well as introduce some contextual explanations to these patterns.

4.1.2 Representatives' class status

For the purpose of analysing the representatives' class status, I will be focusing on three variables: years of political experience, number of terms served in the parliament and the representatives educational background. Together, political and educational profiles will help us to navigate the

level of professionalism or 'elitism' possessed by the MPs and whether the representatives' descriptive characteristics reflect those of the general population.
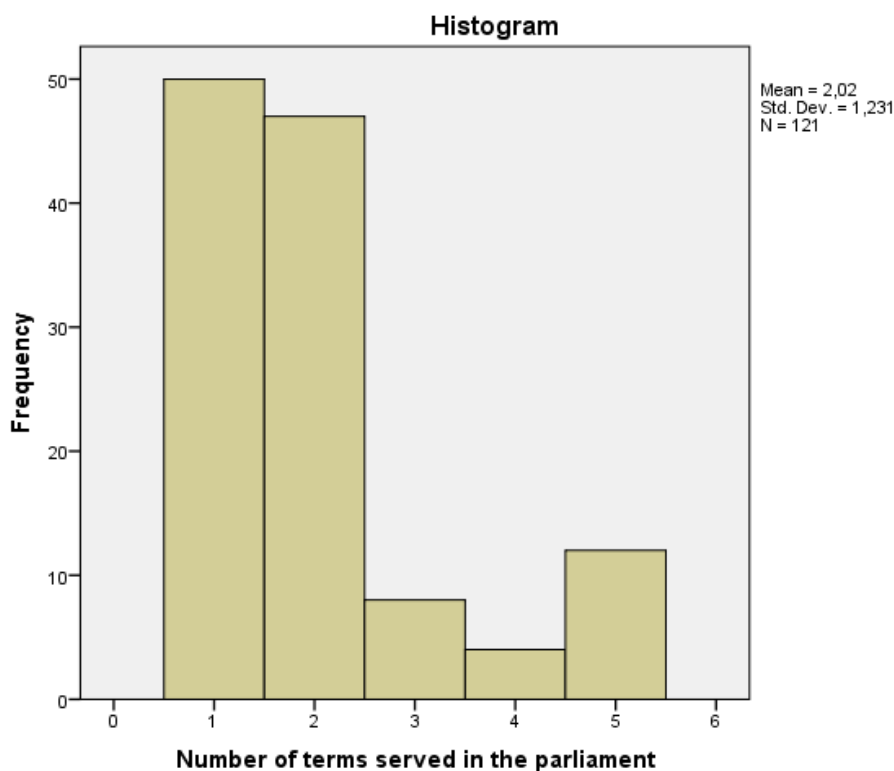
Statistics

		Years of political experience	Number of terms served in the parliament
N	Valid	121	121
	Missing	0	0
Mean		17,36	2,02
Median		15,00	2,00
Std. Deviation		12,644	1,231
Range		52	4

I have created a table of descriptive statistics that summarise the distribution of two variables: years of political experience and the number of terms served in the parliament, both of which are scale variables. Scale variable refers to a variable which can be orderly ranked and in which the distances between categories are identical across the distribution of categories (Bryman, 2012:335). For this reason, an ideal way of presenting scale variables is through summaries of distribution. I have opted for two measures of central tendency: the mean and the median, which refer to the average and middle value of the distribution, respectively (Halperin & Heath, 2012:373). Additionally, I present two measures of dispersion: the range and standard deviation, which portray the difference between the maximum and minimum value and the average amount of variation around the mean (Bryman, 2012:339).

These four measures of dispersion and central tendency provide an accurate and transparent picture of the political experience of the representatives and thus, give us insights to the level of professionalism the MPs possess. Based on these descriptive statistics, we can observe that on average, female MPs have 17,36 years of political experience and have served in the parliament for two terms. This means that an average MP is experienced in politics, yet has been serving in the parliament only for the past two terms (i.e. 9 years). The standard deviation, or average amount of variation around the mean, is relatively high when it comes to previous political experience

rendering a big variation of personal political experience among the women. However, this variation could also potentially be accounted to inaccuracy of primary data, which I elaborated on the point 3.2.1. The risk of data distortion is always present in quantitative research and should be recognised in the analysis of the data. However, for the purpose of making some inferences out of the data we can conclude that most female MPs elected under the ANC VPQ are experienced in politics.
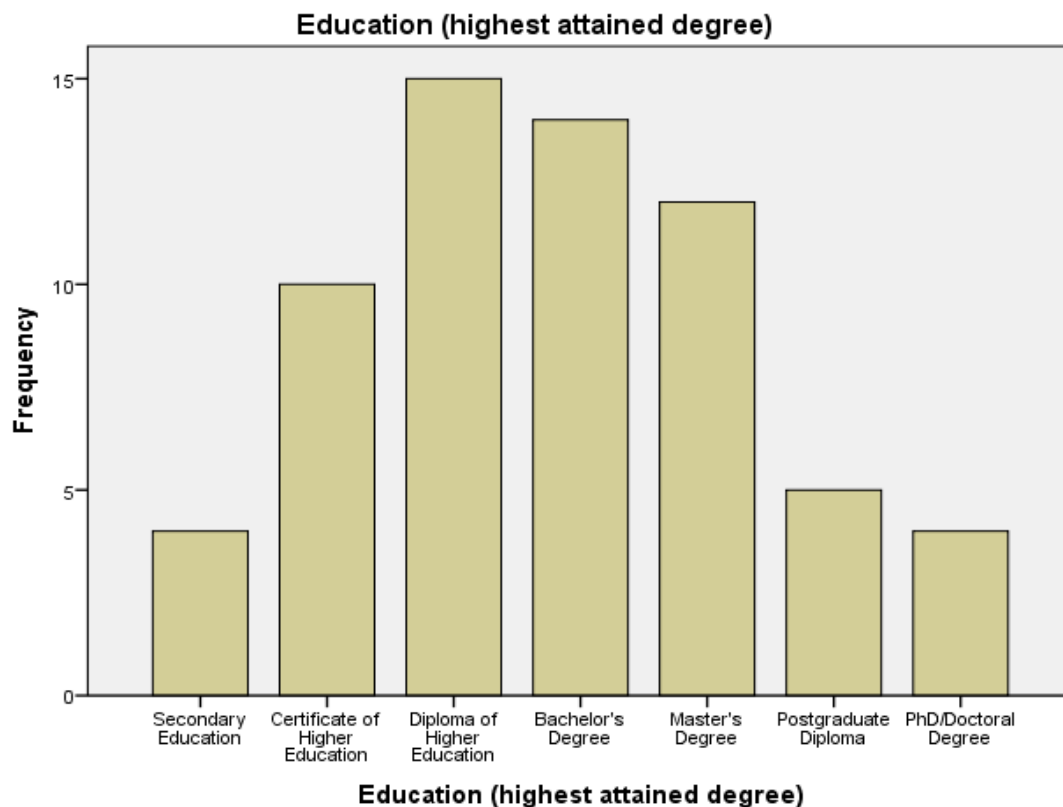
When analysing the standard deviation of the number of terms served in the parliament we can observe a low amount of variation around the mean. This is an interesting observation to make, as it tells us that the majority of the representatives have served in the parliament only for two terms in average. Below, I have presented a histogram showing the frequencies of each category of the variable. We can observe a high concentration of responses around 1 and 2 parliamentary terms, which tells us that a great majority of the current MPs elected under the ANC quota have entered the parliament during or after the 4th democratic elections. It was also during the 4th term the ANC, and South Africa as a whole, experienced a change in political leadership (Ferree, 2017). These observations could render the acclaimed centralisation of political discourse within the ANC and will be further elaborated on section 4.3 where I will describe structural and agency-based explanations to women's descriptive representation.

Histogram

Mean = 2,02
Std. Dev. = 1,231
N = 121

Moving on to my second category of the analysis of the representatives' class, I have created a bar chart and a supplementary frequency table to portray the visualisation and numerical display of the MPs educational backgrounds in terms of the highest degree attained. As discussed in the third, methodological chapter of this thesis (see point 3.2.2), there is a high number of missing values for the representatives' educational background. For the purpose of making meaningful interpretations out of the data while acknowledging the potential biases inherent in data with non-randomly assigned missing values, I will be focusing on the valid per cent of the data provided in the frequency table and bar chart. A valid per cent reports the percentages of a given variable without counting the missing values (Halperin & Heath, 2012:367). The bar chart shows only the percentages of each code based on the valid per cent, whereas the frequency table provides a more transparent account of the distribution of frequencies both with (per cent) and without (valid per cent) the missing values.

Education (highest attained degree)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Secondary Education	4	3,3	6,3	6,3
	Certificate of Higher Education	10	8,3	15,6	21,9
	Diploma of Higher Education	15	12,4	23,4	45,3
	Bachelor's Degree	14	11,6	21,9	67,2
	Master's Degree	12	9,9	18,8	85,9
	Postgraduate Diploma	5	4,1	7,8	93,8
	PhD/Doctoral Degree	4	3,3	6,3	100,0
	Total	64	52,9	100,0	
Missing	999	57	47,1		
Total		121	100,0		

Education (highest attained degree)

What we can observe from the data is a surprisingly low level of higher education among the women MPs. Majority of the representatives seem to obtain either a certificate or diploma of higher education of sorts, or a higher education degree in a form of Bachelor's or Master's degree. An equal number of women MPs (4 responses) possess a PhD/Doctoral Degree or only a secondary education. These levels might be higher than those obtained by the general population, but there is an interesting pattern of inclusion what comes to the educational level requirements for the MPs elected through quotas.

To sum up the findings of my descriptive statistics on women's class status, we can observe conflicting patterns of relatively high levels of previous political experience obtained by the representatives as opposed to the educational levels of these women. An additional level of complexity is introduced when looking into the number of terms served in the parliament. We can observe that while women MPs have high levels of political experience, yet relatively low educational levels for an elite group, most of the representatives have only been members of the parliament for one or two terms. These observations partially support the findings of previous research on women's increasing professionalization, and could potentially be linked to increasing centralisation of the ANC. However, as this section of the analysis is concerned with addressing the

characteristics of women MPs through an intersectional analysis, these points I have raised will be further elaborated on the more interpretive sections 4.2 and 4.3 of my research.

4.1.3 Representatives' ideological diversity

For the last category of the analysis of women MPs intersectional characteristic, I will be focusing on the representatives' ideological diversity. For the purpose of tracing ideological diversity of the MPs, I have decided to focus on two variables: political interests of the representatives as well as their activist background. As outlined in part 3.3.1, I have derived information of the MPs political interests from the following categories of my coding framework: organisational experience/activist background, political experience and personal interests (see more detailed description on page 18).

Both political interest and activist background are nominal variables, for which reason it is most suited to present these variables in the form of a frequency table as well as pie and bar charts. For the purpose of presenting the representatives political interests I have opted for a frequency table and a pie chart which gives us an accurate visualisation of the concentration of different interests. What these statistics show us is a concentration of the MPs political interests on two categories: socioeconomic development and unspecified category. In order to make sense of these findings I will first need to clarify the meaning of these categories.
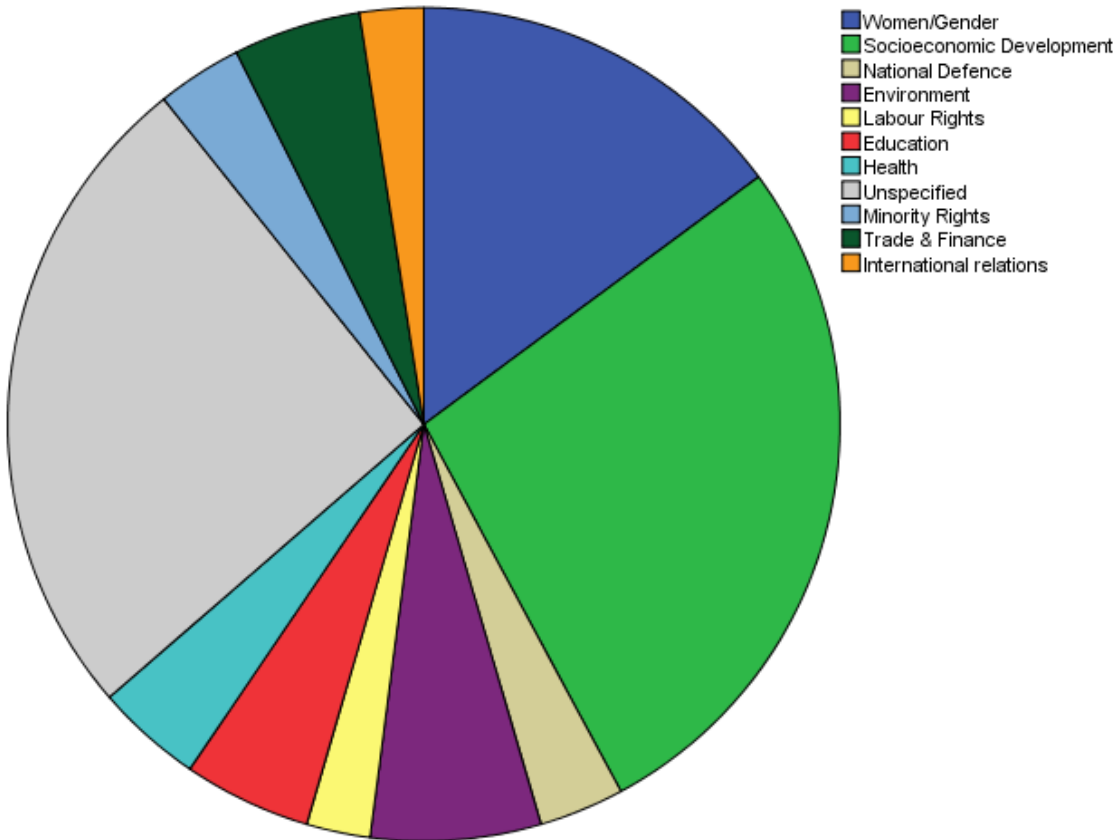
Political interests

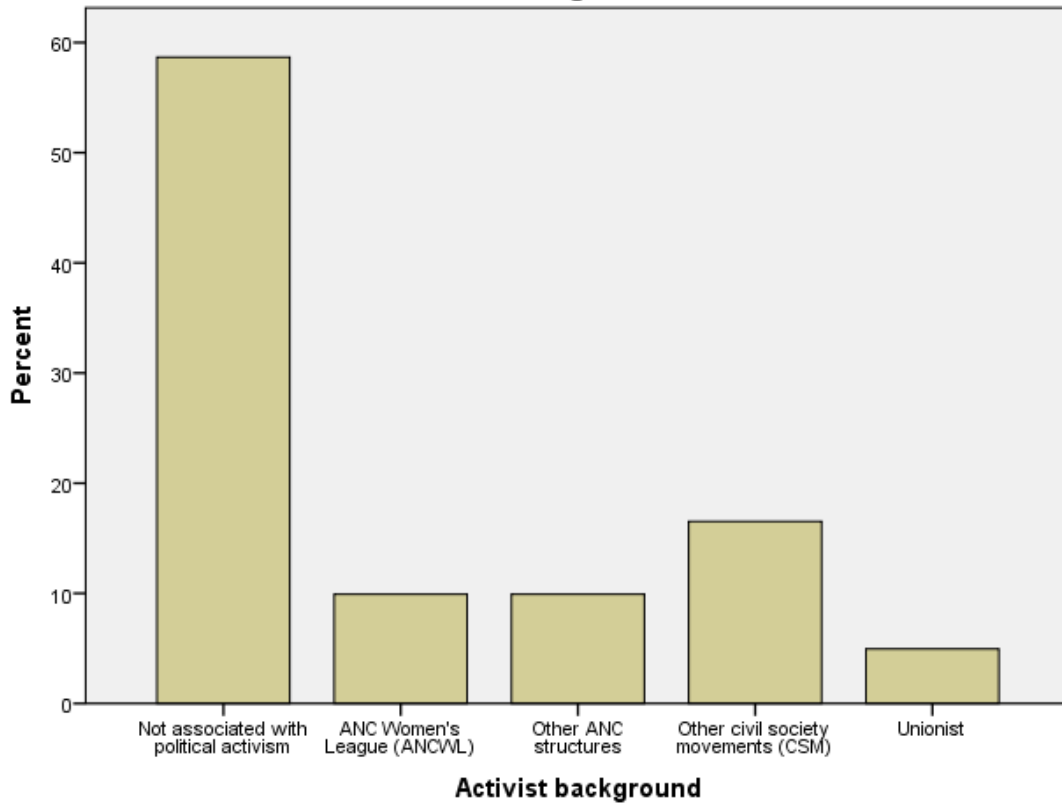|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Women/Gender	18	14,9	14,9	14,9
	Socioeconomic Development	33	27,3	27,3	42,1
	National Defence	4	3,3	3,3	45,5
	Environment	8	6,6	6,6	52,1
	Labour Rights	3	2,5	2,5	54,5
	Education	6	5,0	5,0	59,5
	Health	5	4,1	4,1	63,6
	Unspecified	31	25,6	25,6	89,3
	Minority Rights	4	3,3	3,3	92,6
	Trade & Finance	6	5,0	5,0	97,5
	International relations	3	2,5	2,5	100,0
	Total	121	100,0	100,0	

For the MPs to be categorised as interested in socioeconomic development, their biographical information has pointed out to political engagement or personal interest within the given category. Socioeconomic development is at the centrepiece of the ANC's current political rhetoric (ANC, 2014) which makes it evident that the largest concentration of the MPs interests is on this category. If the argument of ideological concentration of women MPs (Walsh, 2012) holds true, it is understandable that the MPs show interest in this category. The code 'unspecified' however, is slightly more ambiguous category to interpret. I have coded the MPs interests as unspecified if they show interest and are engaged in a broad range of political activities in different committees, organisations or ministerial positions, to give a few examples, that do not concentrate on a specific political issue area. Alternatively, the code unspecified can also point out to a lack of political engagement in any specified issue area. This could point out to the fact that the women are not willing to take a specific political stance in order to avoid being labelled (People's Assembly, 2017). However, this correlation is impossible to be proved based on univariate statistical analysis.

What we can conclude about the statistical analysis of women's political interests is that the concentration of women's interests on one issue area, socioeconomic development, is evident. However, there seem to be a relatively large distribution of interests on a broad range of other issue areas alike, rendering a relatively diversified distribution of political interests among the representatives. What is interesting about this category is not the lack of diversity in women's political interests as pointed out by previous research (Walsh, 2012; Hassim, 2006; Geisler, 2000) but rather, the lack of interest on gendered issue areas or areas of specific interest for women. Based on the frequency table provided above, only 18 MPs or alternatively, 14.9 per cent of women elected under the ANC gender quota show political engagement or personal interest on explicitly women's and/or gendered issue areas. This problematizes the purpose of gender quotas which inherently imply that political interests ought to be gendered, as pointed out by Phillips (1998).

Political interests

Legend:
- Women/Gender
- Socioeconomic Development
- National Defence
- Environment
- Labour Rights
- Education
- Health
- Unspecified
- Minority Rights
- Trade & Finance
- International relations

Activist background

Activist background categories: Not associated with political activism; ANC Women's League (ANCWL); Other ANC structures; Other civil society movements (CSM); Unionist

Continuing the analysis on women's activist background, I have given the variable five different codes: "Not associated with political activism", "ANC Women's League" (ANCWL), Other ANC structures", "Other civil society movements" (CSMs) and "Unionist" presented on a bar chart above. I have opted for presenting the chart in percentages instead of frequencies. For the purpose of frequency distribution, see frequency table below. These activist backgrounds represent women MPs engagement with political activism prior to the first democratic elections in 1994, the year when the ANC introduced its gender quota (Dahlerup et al, 2013:175).

The data on women MPs activist background paints a clear picture on the lack of association of the MPs with political activism. As related to previous political experience discussed under point 4.1.2, this could potentially be associated with data distortion. As I am relying on biographical sources produced by third parties rather than the women MPs themselves, the background information of these representatives can be subjected to biases depending on what information the given sources want to convey of the representatives (Bryman, 2012: 554-555). But what we can conclude from the representatives' activist backgrounds is that there is a possibility that the majority of the representatives (71 MPs or 58,7% of the representatives) are not associated with political activism prior to the elections in 1994. Additionally, only 12 representatives are associated with activism within ANCWL, a central player within the Women's National Coalition, a key force in pushing for a more gender equal agenda into the new democratic parliament (Geisler, 2004:136; Goetz & Hassim, 2003; Meintjes, 2005).

Activist background

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not associated with political activism	71	58,7	58,7	58,7
	ANC Women's League (ANCWL)	12	9,9	9,9	68,6
	Other ANC structures	12	9,9	9,9	78,5
	Other civil society movements (CSM)	20	16,5	16,5	95,0
	Unionist	6	5,0	5,0	100,0
	Total	121	100,0	100,0	

A lack of association with political activism, and specifically, lack of association with activism within the ANCWL can be a sign of selectivity within the ANC when it comes to the nomination of representatives through the VPQ. However, the possibility of data distortion as well as difficulty of drawing causal claims based on univariate analysis need to be considered when drawing associations. What can be stated based on the data on women's activist background is that the lack of activist engagement can be a sign of narrowing ideological diversity among the representatives. This claim is being made within the political context where the majority of women MPs elected through the ANC quota during the first democratic elections were engaged in political activism themselves, most notably within the ANCWL (Walsh, 2012). If these women are no longer represented in the parliament a changing political discourse could partially explain this pattern.

In the next sections of my analysis I will introduce the concepts of political privilege and disadvantage as they relate to political representation within an intersectional analysis, as well as further interpret the findings of my statistical analysis through contextual explanations to the outlined patterns of women's descriptive representation.

4.2 Patterns of political privilege and disadvantage

After providing a thorough description of women MPs intersectional characteristics, it is time to interpret these findings based on the concepts of political privilege and disadvantage. These concepts derive their meaning from the concept of representation inequality grounded in the ontology of power within the theory of intersectionality (Collins & Chepp, 2013; Celis et al, 2016), (see sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2).

What we can observe based on the statistical analysis is a promotion of certain intersectional categories of women MPs who have been elected through the ANC VPQ. First and foremost, there seem to be a high racial concentration of black female representatives, who come from relatively professional political backgrounds but obtain varying levels of education. Additionally, a great majority of these women have only served in the parliament for one or two terms, are generally not associated with political activism and obtain relatively diverse political ideologies. However, interest, or at least previous political engagement, in women's and/or gendered issue areas are low

among the representatives. In order to place these findings under scrutiny, I need to describe what these patterns are a case of. For this purpose, I am employing the concepts of political privilege and disadvantage.

Through the analysis of power in terms of *constitution* (Celis et al, 2016) we can observe how political representation through the ANC gender quota has been powerful in reshaping the position of privilege for educated, politically engaged black female representatives. In this sense, the ANC quota has empowered, if only descriptively, a historically marginalised part of the population based on racial and gender discrimination (SAHO, 2017), by increasing the descriptive representation of black female MPs and making them numerically significant group among the representatives of the parliament. However, patterns of disadvantage emerge alike.

Simultaneously to the described discourses of political privilege, the statistical information of the intersectional characteristics of the MPs tend to support an argument of increasing homogenisation of the representatives, especially through a critical, gendered lens. Based on my statistical analysis we can identify a disconnect between women MPs numerical representation and their engagement and/or interests within gendered/women's issue areas. This identification fits to the discourse of party centralisation of the ANC that has been identified by previous research, and will be further elaborated on the next section of the analysis.

Finally, intersectional analysis of gender quotas places the equal opportunity structure that quotas are aiming to correct under a critical observation. What we can detect from the patterns of political privilege and disadvantage is a promotion of certain racial, class and ideological characteristics of women MPs while a neglect of others. In a model of ideal descriptive representation outlined by Pitkin (1967) this would mean that the ANC gender quota fails to account to an intersectional diversity of the representatives. This brings a new element of criticism to the depicted discourses of failure of the ANC VPQ outlined in previous research.

4.3   Structural and agency-based explanations to women's descriptive representation

On the final section of the analysis I will further my analysis on the structural and agency-based explanations to previously outlined patterns of women's descriptive representation. I raised three critical points of observation on my statistical analysis: 1) racial homogeneity of the representatives, 2) the time served in the parliament is concentrated on the past two terms, and 3) women's political interests are diversified yet not explicitly gendered.

All of these three observations point out to a reoccurring theme of increasing political centralisation of the ANC. What different reports and academic research continuously demonstrate is the increasingly narrowing space for gender equality advocacy and women's empowerment in the legislature (Makhunga, 2014; People's Assembly, 2017; Fester, 2014). These observations lend themselves to patronage politics and party loyalty that produces an anti-transformative gender policy on behalf of the ANC (Makhunga, 2014). Party loyalty can be considered to be a reflection of the ANCs unique gatekeeping position in the context of the South African quota regime (Hassim, 2005). In this way, political agency merges itself to structural factors affecting women's descriptive representation and places the ANC into a position of central political power that encourages strong party discipline and rewards loyalty (Sadie, 2014; Ferree, 2017).

It is beyond the scope of this research to engage in further analysis of the significant power obtained by the ANC within the context of South African political discourse. These points will be further reflected upon on the final section of my thesis where I will present concluding remarks for my research and suggest directions for future research inquiry.

5. Concluding remarks

This research has been a theory-testing exercise with an objective of analysing women's descriptive political representation in South African legislature through an intersectional analysis. I have placed the country's leading political party's, the ANCs, voluntary gender quota under a close scrutiny through an intersectional analysis of female representatives' descriptive characteristics. In the context of growing political centralisation of the ANC and narrowing space for gender mainstreaming agenda, my research has been able to describe some intriguing observations.

Based on patterns of privilege and disadvantage in political representation, I have been able to detect a unique discourse of descriptive empowerment of educated, politically experienced black women, who come from the position of historical dual marginalisation. Simultaneously, my findings have pointed out to a homogenisation of women MPs based on their intersectional, descriptive characteristics. These contradictory findings depict the complexities of political representation produced by quotas and underline the distinct discourses of political privilege for some and disadvantage for others. I have attempted to interpret these findings through contextual factors underlying women's political representation, and as a result, my observations seem to support the increasing centralisation of political power within the ANC. It remains a purpose of future research to further develop these findings, and in the next, final section of my thesis I will identify some potential directions for future research inquiry.

5.1 Directions for future research

By describing the effects of gender quotas on women's intersecting descriptive characteristics, patterns of political privilege and marginalisation as well as the intersections of contextual factors in South Africa, my research encourages future studies to develop these findings on a more explanatory manner. This means interrogating the *how* and *why* questions behind the described patterns of descriptive representation on a deeper level. Given the power of intersectional theory to critically examine and challenge existing ways of thinking and analysing political representation, I am encouraging future research enquiry to adopt this methodology into other dimensions of political representation, namely substantive and symbolic representation.

Expanding the intersectional study of women's political representation into the arrays of substantive and symbolic representation will open up interesting new angles of analytic interrogation by considering how the constitutive nature of power imbedded in intersectional theory can help to explain women's position and voice in the government and how this is reflected in the perception of women MPs on a broader societal level. These angles will provide more explanatory accounts to the political discourses of South African quota policy and interrogate the unique contextual factors embedded in these discourses on a more profound level.

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Appendix A: List of Webpages

Webpage	Purpose	Number of female MPs with profile	Site
People's Assembly	Gathers easily accessible information about South African decision makers to the public	121	https://www.pa.org.za/
The ANC website	Official webpage of the political party	99	http://www.anc.org.za/
The South African Government website	Official webpage of the South African Government	36	https://www.gov.za/
Wikipedia	Online encyclopedia	11	https://www.wikipedia.org/