

The Potentials and Limits of Nordic Equality Politics in Times of Globalisation and Change  
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Paper: Re-gendering of Political Representation

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Entertaining and emotional, but at the same time moralising, news media has become a central part of political publicity that seems to be creating a new kind of affective political community. In this paper I ask how this new kind of political communication and community - increasingly constructed also in and by social media – is gendering and sexualising political representation and representatives. In the last twenty years, the type of gendered political representation characteristic of modern industrial societies has been crumbling indicated, for instance, by women's increasing representation in top-level politics. Nevertheless, gender is still an excluding and discriminating category in politics also in the Nordic countries. New characteristics to the post-industrial polity are that gender (and sexuality) has become a crucial element in building the public images of politicians. But at the same time, gender has become a more and more flexible category. On the one hand, the media representations of top-level politicians exaggerate gender differences strengthening the hetero-normative political order (according to which only masculine characteristics pave the way to the top). But on the other hand, new political images and 'bodies' that make use of various kinds of feminine and masculine styles have started to contest this very (hetero)norm. The paper asks how has this re-gendering of political representation changed the notion of political representation and to what kind of identities, interests and affects is this (emerging) new political gender attached to?